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The Complete Works of
Count Tolstóy

Volume II.

A LANDED PROPRIETOR
THE COSSACKS
SEVASTOPOL

BY

COUNT LEV N. TOLSTÓY

TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL RUSSIAN AND EDITED BY

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A MORNING OF A LANDED PROPRIETOR

1852

A MORNING OF A LANDED PROPRIETOR

Fragment from an Unfinished Novel, "A Russian Proprietor"

I.

Prince Nekhlyúdov was nineteen years old when he came from the Third Course of the university to pass his vacation on his estate, and remained there by himself all summer. In the autumn he wrote in his unformed childish hand to his aunt, Countess Byeloryétski, who, in his opinion, was his best friend and the most brilliant woman in the world. The letter was in French, and ran as follows:

"Dear Aunty: — I have made a resolution on which the fate of my whole life must depend. I will leave the university in order to devote myself to country life, because I feel that I was born for it. For God's sake, dear aunty, do not laugh at me! You will say that I am young; and, indeed, I may still be a child, but this does not prevent me from feeling what my calling is, and from wishing to do good, and loving it.

"As I have written you before, I found affairs in an indescribable disorder. Wishing to straighten them out, and to understand them, I discovered that the main evil

lay in the most pitiable, poverty-stricken condition of the peasants, and that the evil was such that it could be mended by labour and patience alone. If you could only see two of my peasants, Davýd and Iván, and the lives which they lead with their families, I am sure that the mere sight of these unfortunates would convince you more than all I might say to explain my intention to you.

"Is it not my sacred and direct duty to care for the welfare of these seven hundred men, for whom I shall be held responsible before God? Is it not a sin to abandon them to the arbitrariness of rude elders and managers, for plans of enjoyment and ambition? And why should I look in another sphere for opportunities of being useful and doing good, when such a noble, brilliant, and immediate duty is open to me?

"I feel myself capable of being a good landed proprietor; and, in order to be one, as I understand this word, one needs neither a university diploma, nor ranks, which you are so anxious I should obtain. Dear aunty, make no ambitious plans for me! Accustom yourself to the thought that I have chosen an entirely different path, which is, nevertheless, good, and which, I feel, will bring me happiness. I have thought much, very much, about my future duty, have written out rules for my actions, and, if God will only grant me life and strength, shall succeed in my undertaking.

"Do not show this letter to my brother Vásya. I am afraid of his ridicule; he is in the habit of directing me, and I of submitting to him. Ványa will understand my intention, even though he may not approve of it."

The countess answered with the following French letter:

"Your letter, dear Dmítri, proved nothing to me, except that you have a beautiful soul, which fact I have

never doubted. But, dear friend, our good qualities do us more harm in life than our bad ones. I will not tell you that you are committing a folly, and that your conduct mortifies me; I will try to influence you by arguments alone. Let us reason, my friend. You say that you feel a calling for country life, that you wish to make your peasants happy, and that you hope to be a good proprietor. (1) I must tell you that we feel a calling only after we have made a mistake in it; (2) that it is easier to make yourself happy than others; and (3) that in order to be a good proprietor, one must be a cold and severe man, which you will scarcely be, however much you may try to dissemble.

"You consider your reflections incontrovertible, and even accept them as rules of conduct; but at my age, my dear, we do not believe in reflections and rules, but only in experience; and experience tells me that your plans are childish. I am not far from fifty, and I have known many worthy people, but I have never heard of a young man of good family and of ability burying himself in the country, for the sake of doing good. You always wished to appear original, but your originality is nothing but superfluous self-love. And, my dear, you had better choose well-trodden paths! They lead more easily to success, and success, though you may not need it as success, is necessary in order to have the possibility of doing the good which you wish.

"The poverty of a few peasants is a necessary evil, or an evil which may be remedied without forgetting all your obligations to society, to your relatives, and to yourself. With your intellect, with your heart and love of virtue, there is not a career in which you would not obtain success; but at least choose one which would be worthy of you and would do you honour.

"I believe in your sincerity, when you say that you have no ambition; but you are deceiving yourself. Am-

bition is a virtue at your years and with your means; but it becomes a defect and a vulgarity, when a man is no longer able to satisfy that passion. You, too, will experience it, if you will not be false to your intention. Good-bye, dear Mítya! It seems to me that I love you even more for your insipid, but noble and magnanimous, plan. Do as you think best, but I confess I cannot agree with you."

Having received this letter, the young man long meditated over it; finally, having decided that even a brilliant woman may make mistakes, he petitioned for a discharge from the university, and for ever remained in the country.

II.

THE young proprietor, as he wrote to his aunt, had formed rules of action for his estate, and all his life and occupations were scheduled by hours, days, and months. Sunday was appointed for the reception of petitioners, domestic and manorial serfs, for the inspection of the farms of the needy peasants, and for the distribution of supplies with the consent of the Commune, which met every Sunday evening, and was to decide what aid each was to receive. More than a year passed in these occupations, and the young man was not entirely a novice, either in the practical or in the theoretical knowledge of farming.

It was a clear June Sunday when Nekhlyúdov, after drinking his coffee, and running through a chapter of "Maison Rustique," with a note-book and a package of bills in the pocket of his light overcoat, walked out of the large, columnated, and terraced country-house, in which he occupied a small room on the lower story, and directed his way, over the neglected, weed-grown paths of the old English garden, to the village that was situated on both sides of the highway. Nekhlyúdov was a tall, slender young man with long, thick, wavy, auburn hair, with a bright sparkle in his black eyes, with red cheeks, and ruby lips over which the first down of youth was just appearing. In all his movements and in his gait were to be seen strength, energy, and the good-natured self-satisfaction of youth. The peasants were returning in variegated crowds from church; old men, girls, children,

women with their suckling babes, in gala attire, were scattering to their huts, bowing low to their master, and making a circuit around him. When Nekhlyúdov reached the street, he stopped, drew his note-book from his pocket, and on the last page, which was covered with a childish handwriting, read several peasant names, with notes. "Iván Churís asked for fork posts," he read, and, proceeding in the street, walked up to the gate of the second hut on the right.

Churís's dwelling consisted of a half-rotten log square, musty at the corners, bending to one side, and so sunken in the ground that one broken, red, sliding window, with its battered shutter, and another smaller window, stopped up with a bundle of flax, were to be seen right over the dung-heap. A plank vestibule, with a decayed threshold and low door; another smaller square, more rickety and lower than the vestibule; a gate, and a wicker shed clung to the main hut. All that had at one time been covered by one uneven thatch; but now the black, rotting straw hung only over the eaves, so that in places the framework and the rafters could be seen. In front of the yard was a well, with a dilapidated box, with a remnant of a post and wheel, and a dirty puddle made by the tramping of the cattle, in which some ducks were splashing. Near the well stood two ancient, cracked, and broken willows, with scanty, pale green leaves. Under one of these willows, which witnessed to the fact that at some time in the past some one had tried to beautify the spot, sat an eight-year-old blonde little maiden, with another two-year-old girl crawling on the ground. A pup, which was wagging his tail near them, ran headlong under the gate, the moment he noticed the master, and from there burst into a frightened, quivering bark.

"Is Iván at home?" asked Nekhlyúdov.

The older girl was almost petrified at this question, and was opening her eyes wider and wider, but did not

answer; the smaller one opened her mouth, and was getting ready to cry. A small old woman, in a torn checkered dress, girded low with an old, reddish belt, looked from behind the door, but did not answer. Nekhlyúdov walked up to the vestibule, and repeated his question.

"At home, benefactor," said the old woman, in a quivering voice, bowing low, and agitated with terror.

When Nekhlyúdov greeted her, and passed through the vestibule into the narrow yard, the old woman put her hand to her chin, walked up to the door, and, without turning her eyes away from the master, began slowly to shake her head.

The yard looked wretched. Here and there lay old blackened manure that had not been removed; on the manure-heap lay carelessly a musty block, a fork, and two harrows. The sheds about the yard, under which stood, on one side, a plough and a cart without a wheel, and lay a mass of empty, useless beehives in confusion, were nearly all unthatched, and one side had fallen in, so that the girders no longer rested on the fork posts, but on the manure.

Churís, striking with the edge and head of his axe, was trying to remove a wicker fence which the roof had crushed. Iván Churís was a man about fifty years of age. He was below the average height. The features of his tanned, oblong face, encased in an auburn beard with streaks of gray, and thick hair of the same colour, were fair and expressive. His dark blue, half-shut eyes shone with intelligence and careless good nature. A small, regular mouth, sharply defined under a scanty blond moustache, expressed, whenever he smiled, calm self-confidence and a certain derisive indifference to his surroundings. From the coarseness of his skin, deep wrinkles, sharply defined veins on his neck, face, and hands, from his unnatural stoop, and crooked, arch-like

legs, it could be seen that all his life had passed in extremely hard labour, which was beyond his strength. His attire consisted of white hempen drawers, with blue patches over his knees, and a similar dirty shirt, which was threadbare on his back and arms. The shirt was girded low by a thin ribbon, from which hung a brass key.

"God aid you!" said the master, entering the yard.

Churís looked around him, and again took up his work. After an energetic effort he straightened out the wicker work from under the shed; then only he struck the axe into a block, pulled his shirt in shape, and walked into the middle of the yard.

"I wish you a pleasant holiday, your Grace!" he said, making a low obeisance, and shaking his hair.

"Thank you, my dear. I just came to look at your farm," said Nekhlyúdov, with childish friendliness and embarrassment, examining the peasant's garb. "Let me see for what you need the fork posts that you asked of me at the meeting of the Commune."

"The forks? Why, your Grace, you know what forks are for. I just wanted to give a little support to it, — you may see for yourself. Only a few days ago a corner fell in, and by God's kindness there were no animals in it at the time. It barely hangs together," said Churís, contemptuously surveying his unthatched, crooked, and dilapidated sheds. "When it comes to that, there is not a decent girder, rafter, or box case in them. Where am I to get the timber? You know that yourself."

"Then why do you ask for five forks when one shed is all fallen in, and the others soon will fall? What you need is not forks, but rafters, girders, posts, — all new ones," said the master, obviously parading his familiarity with the subject.

Churís was silent.

"What you need, therefore, is timber and not forks. You ought to have said so."

"Of course, I need that, but where am I to get it? It won't do to go for everything to the manor. What kind of peasants should we be if we were permitted to go to the manor to ask your Grace for everything? But if you will permit me to take the oak posts that are lying uselessly in the threshing-floor of the manor," he said, bowing, and resting now on one foot, now on the other, "I might manage, by changing some, and cutting down others, to fix something with that old material."

"With the old material? But you say yourself that everything of yours is old and rotten. To-day one corner is falling in, to-morrow another, and day after to-morrow a third. So, if you are to do anything about it, you had better put in everything new, or else your labour will be lost. Tell me, what is your opinion? Can your buildings last through the winter, or not?"

"Who knows?"

"No, what do you think? Will they fall in, or not?"

Churís meditated for a moment.

"It will all fall in," he said, suddenly.

"Well, you see, you ought to have said at the meeting that you have to get the whole property mended, and not that you need a few forks. I am only too glad to aid you."

"We are very well satisfied with your favour," answered Churís, incredulously, without looking at the master. "If you would only favour me with four logs and the forks, I might manage it myself; and whatever useless timber I shall take out, might be used for supports in the hut."

"Is your hut in a bad condition, too?"

"My wife and I are expecting every moment to be crushed," Churís answered, with indifference. "Lately a strut from the ceiling struck down my old woman."

"What? Struck down?"

"Yes, struck her down, your Grace. It just whacked

her on the back so that she was left for dead until the evening."

"Well, did she get over it?"

"She did get over it, but she is ailing now. Although, of course, she has been sickly since her birth."

"What, are you sick?" Nekhlyúdov asked the old woman, who continued to stand in the door, and began to groan the moment her husband spoke of her.

"Something catches right in here, that's all," she answered, pointing to her dirty, emaciated bosom.

"Again!" angrily exclaimed the young master, shrugging his shoulders. "There you are, sick, and you did not come to the hospital. That is what the hospital was made for. Have you not been told of it?"

"They told us, benefactor, but we have had no time: there is the manorial work, and the house, and the children, — I am all alone! There is nobody to help me —"

III.

Nekhlyúdov walked into the hut. The uneven, grimy walls were in the kitchen corner covered with all kinds of rags and clothes, while the corner of honour was literally red with cockroaches that swarmed about the images and benches. In the middle of this black, ill-smelling, eighteen-foot hut there was a large crack in the ceiling, and although supports were put in two places, the ceiling was so bent that it threatened to fall down any minute.

"Yes, the hut is in a very bad shape," said the master, gazing at the face of Churís, who, it seemed, did not wish to begin a conversation about this matter.

"It will kill us, and the children, too," the old woman kept saying, in a tearful voice, leaning against the oven under the hanging beds.

"Don't talk!" sternly spoke Churís, and, turning to the master, with a light, barely perceptible smile, which had formed itself under his quivering moustache, he said: "I am at a loss, your Grace, what to do with this hut. I have braced it and mended it, but all in vain."

"How are we to pass a winter in it? Oh, oh, oh!" said the woman.

"Now, if I could put in a few braces and fix a new strut," her husband interrupted her, with a calm, business-like expression, "and change one rafter, we might be able to get through another winter. We might be able to live here, only it will be all cut up by the braces; and if anybody should touch it, not a thing would be left alive; but

it might do, as long as it stands and holds together," he concluded, evidently satisfied with his argument.

Nekhlyúdov was annoyed and pained because Churís had come to such a state without having asked his aid before, whereas he had not once since his arrival refused the peasants anything, and had requested that everybody should come to him directly if they needed anything. He was even vexed at the peasant, angrily shrugged his shoulders, and frowned; but the sight of wretchedness about him, and Churís's calm and self-satisfied countenance amidst this wretchedness, changed his vexation into a melancholy, hopeless feeling.

"Now, Iván, why did you not tell me before?" he remarked reproachfully, sitting down on a dirty, crooked bench.

"I did not dare to, your Grace," answered Churís, with the same scarcely perceptible smile, shuffling his black, bare feet on the uneven dirt floor; but he said it so boldly and quietly that it was hard to believe that he had been afraid to approach the master.

"We are peasants: how dare we —" began the woman, sobbing.

"Stop your prattling," Churís again turned to her.

"You cannot live in this hut, that is impossible!" said Nekhlyúdov, after a moment's silence. "This is what we will do, my friend —"

"I am listening, sir," Churís interrupted him.

"Have you seen the stone huts, with the hollow walls, that I have had built in the new hamlet?"

"Of course I have, sir," replied Churís, showing his good white teeth in his smile. "We marvelled a great deal as they were building them, — wonderful huts! The boys made sport of them, saying that the hollow walls were storehouses, to keep rats away. Fine huts!" he concluded, with an expression of sarcastic incredulity, shaking his head. "Regular jails!"

"Yes, excellent huts, dry and warm, and not so likely to take fire," retorted the master, with a frown on his youthful face, obviously dissatisfied with the peasant's sarcasm.

"No question about that, your Grace, fine huts."

"Now, one of those huts is all ready. It is a thirty-foot hut, with vestibules and a storeroom, ready for occupancy. I will let you have it at your price; you will pay me when you can," said the master, with a self-satisfied smile, which he could not keep back, at the thought that he was doing a good act. "You will break down your old hut," he continued; "it will do yet for a barn. We will transfer the outhouses in some way. There is excellent water there. I will cut a garden for you out of the cleared ground, and also will lay out a piece of land for you in three parcels. You will be happy there. Well, are you not satisfied?" asked Nekhlyúdov, when he noticed that the moment he mentioned changing quarters Churís stood in complete immobility and, without a smile, gazed at the floor.

"It is your Grace's will," he answered, without lifting his eyes.

The old woman moved forward, as if touched to the quick, and was about to say something, but her husband anticipated her.

"It is your Grace's will," he repeated, firmly, and at the same time humbly, looking at his master, and shaking his hair, "but it will not do for us to live in the new hamlet."

"Why?"

"No, your Grace! We are badly off here, but if you transfer us there, we sha'n't stay peasants long. What kind of peasants can we be there? It is impossible to live there, saving your Grace!"

"Why not?"

"We shall be completely ruined, your Grace!"

"But why is it impossible to live there?"

"What life will it be? You judge for yourself: the place has never been inhabited; the quality of the water is unknown; there is no place to drive the cattle to. Our hemp plots have been manured here since time immemorial, but how is it there? Why, there is nothing but barrenness there. Neither fences, nor kilns, nor sheds, — nothing. We shall be ruined, your Grace, if you insist upon our going there, completely ruined! It is a new place, an unknown place —" he repeated, with a melancholy, but firm, shake of his head.

Nekhlyúdov began to prove to the peasant that the transfer would be very profitable to him, that fences and sheds would be put up, that the water was good there, and so forth; but Churís's dull silence embarrassed him, and he felt that he was not saying what he ought to. Churís did not reply; but when the master grew silent, he remarked, with a light smile, that it would be best to settle the old domestic servants and Aléshka the fool in that hamlet, to keep a watch on the grain.

"Now that would be excellent," he remarked, and smiled again. "It is a useless affair, your Grace!"

"What of it if it is an uninhabited place?" Nekhlyúdov expatiated, patiently. "Here was once an uninhabited place, and people are living in it now. And so you had better settle there in a lucky hour — Yes, you had better settle there —"

"But, your Grace, there is no comparison!" Churís answered with animation, as if afraid that the master might have taken his final resolution. "Here is a cheery place, a gay place, and we are used to it, and to the road, and the pond, where the women wash the clothes and the cattle go to water; and all our peasant surroundings have been here since time immemorial, — the threshing-floor, the garden, and the willows that my parents have set out. My grandfather and father have given their souls to God here, and I ask nothing else, your Grace, but to be able

to end my days here. If it should be your favour to mend the hut, we shall be greatly obliged to your Grace; if not, we shall manage to end our days in the old hut. Let us pray to the Lord all our days," he continued, making low obeisances. "Drive us not from our nest, sir."

While Churís was speaking, ever louder and louder sobs were heard under the beds, in the place where his wife stood, and when her husband pronounced the word "sir," his wife suddenly rushed out and, weeping, threw herself down at the master's feet:

"Do not ruin us, benefactor! You are our father, you are our mother! What business have we to move? We are old and lonely people. Both God and you —" She burst out in tears.

Nekhlyúdov jumped up from his seat, and wanted to raise the old woman, but she struck the earth floor with a certain voluptuousness of despair, and pushed away the master's hand.

"What are you doing? Get up, please! If you do not wish, you do not have to," he said, waving his hands, and retreating to the door.

When Nekhlyúdov seated himself again on the bench, and silence reigned in the hut, interrupted only by the blubbering of the old woman, who had again removed herself to her place under the beds, and was there wiping off her tears with the sleeve of her shirt, the young proprietor comprehended what meaning the dilapidated wretched hut, the broken well with the dirty puddle, the rotting stables and barns, and the split willows that could be seen through the crooked window, had for Churís and his wife, and a heavy, melancholy feeling came over him, and he was embarrassed.

"Why did you not say at the meeting of last week that you needed a hut? I do not know now how to help you. I told you all at the first meeting that I was settled in the estate, and that I meant to devote my life to you; that I

was prepared to deprive myself of everything in order to see you contented and happy — and I vow before God that I will keep my word," said the youthful proprietor, unconscious of the fact that such ebullitions were unable to gain the confidence of any man, least of all a Russian, who loves not words but deeds, and who is averse to the expression of feelings, however beautiful.

The simple-hearted young man was so happy in the sentiment which he was experiencing that he could not help pouring it out.

Churís bent his head sideways and, blinking slowly, listened with forced attention to his master as to a man who must be listened to, though he may say things that are not very agreeable and have not the least reference to the listener.

"But I cannot give everybody all they ask of me. If I did not refuse anybody who asks me for timber, I should soon be left with none myself, and would be unable to give to him who is really in need of it. That is why I have put aside a part of the forest to be used for mending the peasant buildings, and have turned it over to the Commune. That forest is no longer mine, but yours, the peasants', and I have no say about it, but the Commune controls it as it sees fit. Come this evening to the meeting; I will tell the Commune of your need: if it resolves to give you a new hut, it is well, but I have no forest. I am anxious to help you with all my heart; but if you do not want to move, the Commune will have to arrange it for you, and not I. Do you understand me?"

"We are very well satisfied with your favour," answered the embarrassed Churís. "If you will deign to let me have a little timber for the outbuildings, I will manage one way or other. The Commune? Well, we know — "

"No, you had better come."

"Your servant, sir. I shall be there. Why should I not go? Only I will not ask the Commune for anything."

IV.

The young proprietor evidently wanted to ask the peasant people something else; he did not rise from the bench, and with indecision looked now at Churís, and now into the empty, cold oven.

"Have you had your dinner?" he finally asked them.

Under Churís's moustache played a sarcastic smile, as though it amused him to hear the master ask such foolish questions; he did not answer.

"What dinner, benefactor?" said the old woman, with a deep sigh. "We have eaten some bread. That was our dinner. There was no time to-day to go for some sorrel, and so there was nothing to make soup with, and what kvas there was I gave to the children."

"To-day we have a hunger fast, your Grace," Churís chimed in, glossing his wife's words. "Bread and onions, — such is our peasant food. Thank the Lord I have some little bread; by your favour it has lasted until now; but the rest of our peasants have not even that. The onions are a failure this year. We sent a few days ago to Mikháylo the gardener, but he asks a penny a bunch, and we are too poor for that. We have not been to church since Easter, and we have no money with which to buy a candle for St. Nicholas."

Nekhlyúdov had long known, not by hearsay, nor trusting the words of others, but by experience, all the extreme wretchedness of his peasants; but all that reality was so incompatible with his education, his turn of mind, and manner of life, that he involuntarily forgot the

truth; and every time when he was reminded of it in a vivid and palpable manner, as now, his heart felt intolerably heavy and sad, as though he were tormented by the recollection of some unatoned crime which he had committed.

"Why are you so poor?" he said, involuntarily expressing his thought.

"What else are we to be, your Grace, if not poor? You know yourself what kind of soil we have: clay and clumps, and we must have angered God, for since the cholera we have had very poor crops of grain. The meadows and fields have grown less; some have been taken into the estate, others have been directly attached to the manorial fields. I am all alone and old. I would gladly try to do something, but I have no strength. My old woman is sick, and every year she bears a girl; they have to be fed. I am working hard all by myself, and there are seven souls in the house. It is a sin before God our Lord, but I often think it would be well if he took some of them away as soon as possible. It would be easier for me and for them too, it would be better than to suffer here —"

"Oh, oh!" the woman sighed aloud, as though confirming her husband's words.

"Here is my whole help," continued Churís, pointing to a flaxen-haired, shaggy boy of some seven years, with an immense belly, who, softly creaking the door, had just entered timidly, and, morosely fixing his wondering eyes upon the master, with both his hands was holding on to his father's shirt. "Here is my entire help," continued Churís, in a sonorous voice, passing his rough hand through his child's hair. "It will be awhile before he will be able to do anything, and in the meantime the work is above my strength. It is not so much my age as the rupture that is undoing me. In bad weather it just makes me scream. I ought to have given up the

land long ago, and been accounted an old man. Here is Ermílov, Démkin, Zyábrev, — they are all younger than I, but they have long ago given up the land. But I have no one to whom I might turn over the land, — that's where the trouble is. I must support the family, so I am struggling, your Grace."

"I would gladly make it easier for you, really. How can I?" said the young master, sympathetically, looking at the peasant.

"How make it easier? Of course, he who holds land must do the manorial work; that is an established rule. I shall wait for the little fellow to grow up. If it is your will, excuse him from school; for a few days ago the village scribe came and said that your Grace wanted him to come to school. Do excuse him: what mind can he have, your Grace? He is too young, and has not much sense yet."

"No; this, my friend, must be," said the master. "Your boy can comprehend, it is time for him to study. I am saying it for your own good. You judge yourself: when he grows up, and becomes a householder, he will know how to read and write, and he will read in church, — everything will go well with you, with God's aid," said Nekhlyúdov, trying to express himself as clearly as possible, and, at the same time, blushing and stammering.

"No doubt, your Grace, you do not wish us any harm; but there is nobody at home; my wife and I have to work in the manorial field, and, small though he is, he helps us some, by driving the cattle home, and taking the horses to water. As little as he is, he is a peasant all the same," and Churís, smiling, took hold of his boy's nose between his thick fingers, and cleaned it.

"Still, send him when he is at home, and has time, — do you hear? — without fail."

Churís drew a deep sigh, and did not reply.

V.

"THERE is something else I wanted to tell you," said Nekhlyúdov. "Why has not your manure been removed?"

"What manure is there to take away, your Grace? How many animals have I? A little mare and a colt, and the young heifer I gave last autumn to the porter; that is all the animals I have."

"You have so few animals, and yet you gave your heifer away?" the master asked, in amazement.

"What was I to feed her on?"

"Have you not enough straw to feed a cow with? Everybody else has."

"Others have manured land, and my land is mere clay that you can't do anything with."

"But that is what your manure is for, to take away the clay: and the soil will produce grain, and you will have something to feed your animals with."

"But if there are no animals, where is the manure to come from?"

"This is a strange *cercle vicieux*," thought Nekhlyúdov, but was at a loss how to advise the peasant.

"And then again, your Grace, not the manure makes the grain grow, but God," continued Churís. "Now, last year I got six ricks out of one unmanured eighth, but from another dressed eighth I did not reap as much as a cock. God alone!" he added, with a sigh. "And the cattle somehow do not thrive in our yard. They have died for six years in succession. Last year a heifer died,

the other I sold, for we had nothing to live on ; two years ago a fine cow died ; when she was driven home from the herd, there was nothing the matter with her, but she suddenly staggered, and staggered, and off she went. Just my bad luck!"

"Well, my friend, you may say what you please about not having any cattle, because you have no feed, and about having no feed, because you have no cattle, — here is some money for a cow," said Nekhlyúdov, blushing, and taking from his trousers' pocket a package of crumpled bills, and running through it. "Buy yourself a cow, with my luck, and get the feed from the barn, — I will give orders. Be sure and have a cow by next Sunday, — I will look in."

Churís smiled and shuffled his feet, and for so long did not stretch out his hand for the money, that Nekhlyúdov put it on the end of the table, and reddened even more.

"We are very well satisfied with your favour," said Churís, with his usual, slightly sarcastic smile.

The old woman sighed heavily several times, standing under the beds, and seemed to be uttering a prayer.

The young master felt embarrassed; he hastily rose from his bench, walked out into the vestibule, and called Churís. The sight of a man to whom he had done a good turn was so pleasant, that he did not wish to part from it so soon.

"I am glad I can help you," he said, stopping near the well. "It is all right to help you, because I know you are not a lazy man. You will work, and I will help you ; with God's aid things will improve."

"There is no place for improvement, your Grace," said Churís, suddenly assuming a serious, and even an austere, expression on his face, as though dissatisfied with the master's supposition that he might improve. "I lived with my brothers when my father was alive, and we

suffered no want; but when he died, and we separated, things went from worse to worse. It is all because we are alone!"

"But why did you separate?"

"All on account of the women, your Grace. At that time your grandfather was not living, or they would not have dared to; then there was real order. He looked after everything, like you, — and we should not have dared to think of separating. Your grandfather did not let the peasants off so easily. But after him the estate was managed by Andréy Ilích, — may he not live by this memory, — he was a drunkard and an unreliable man. We went to him once, and a second time. 'There is no getting along with the women,' we said, 'let us separate.' Well, he gave it to us, but, in the end, the women had their way, and we separated; and you know what a peasant is all by himself! Well, there was no order here, and Andréy Ilích treated us as he pleased. 'Let there be everything!' but he never asked where a peasant was to get it. Then they increased the capitation tax, and began to collect more provisions for the table, but the land grew less, and the crops began to fail. And when it came to resurveying the land, he attached our manured land to the manorial strip, the rascal, and he left us just to die!

"Your father — the kingdom of heaven be his — was a good master, but we hardly ever saw him: he lived all the time in Moscow; of course, we had to carry supplies there frequently. There may have been bad roads, and no fodder, but we had to go! How could the master get along without it? We can't complain about that, only there was no order. Now, your Grace admits every peasant into your presence, and we are different people, and the steward is a different man. But before, the estate was left in guardianship, and there was no real master; the guardian was master, and Ilích was master,

and his wife was mistress, and the scribe was master. The peasants came to grief, oh, to so much grief!"

Again Nekhlyúdov experienced a feeling akin to shame or to pricks of conscience. He raised his hat a little, and walked away.

VI.

"YUKHVÁNKA the Shrewd wants to sell a horse," Nekhlyúdov read in his note-book, and crossed the street. Yukhvánka's hut was carefully thatched with straw from the manorial barn, and was constructed of fresh, light gray aspen timbers (also from the manorial forest), with two shutters painted red, and a porch with a roof, and a quaint shingle balustrade of an artistic design. The vestibule and the "cold" hut were also in proper condition; but the general aspect of sufficiency and well-being, which this collection of buildings had, was somewhat impaired by the outhouse which leaned against the gate, with its unfinished wicker fence and open thatch which could be seen from behind it.

At the same time that Nekhlyúdov was approaching the porch from one side, two peasant women came from the other with a full tub. One of them was the wife, the other the mother of Yukhvánka the Shrewd. The first was a plump, red-cheeked woman, with an unusually well-developed bosom, and broad, fleshy cheek-bones. She wore a clean shirt, embroidered on the sleeves and collar, an apron similarly decorated, a new linen skirt, leather shoes, glass beads, and a foppish square head-gear made of red paper and spangles.

The end of the yoke did not shake, but lay firmly on her broad and solid shoulder. The light exertion which was noticeable in her ruddy face, in the curvature of her back, and in the measured motion of her arms and legs, pointed to extraordinary health and masculine strength.

Yukhvánka's mother, who was carrying the other end of the yoke, was, on the contrary, one of those old women who seem to have reached the extreme limit of old age and disintegration possible in living man. Her bony frame, covered with a black, torn shirt and colourless skirt, was so bent that the yoke rested more on her back than on her shoulder. Both her hands, with the distorted fingers of which she seemed to cling to the yoke, were of a dark brown colour, and seemed incapable of unbending; her drooping head, which was wrapped in a rag, bore the most monstrous traces of wretchedness and old age. From under her narrow brow, which was furrowed in all directions by deep wrinkles, two red eyes, bereft of their lashes, looked dimly to the ground. One yellow tooth protruded from her upper sunken lip, and, shaking continually, now and then collided with her sharp chin. The wrinkles on the lower part of her face and throat resembled pouches that kept on shaking with every motion. She breathed heavily and hoarsely; but her bare, distorted feet, though apparently shuffling with difficulty against the ground, moved evenly one after the other.

VII.

Having almost collided with the master, the young woman deftly put down the tub, looked abashed, made a bow, glanced timidly at the master with her sparkling eyes, and trying with the sleeve of her embroidered shirt to conceal a light smile, and tripping in her leather shoes, ran up the steps.

"Mother, take the yoke to Aunt Nastásya," she said, stopping in the door and turning to the old woman.

The modest young proprietor looked sternly, but attentively, at the ruddy woman, frowned, and turned to the old woman, who straightened out the yoke with her crooked fingers, and, slinging it over her shoulder, obediently directed her steps to the neighbouring hut.

"Is your son at home?" asked the master.

The old woman bent her arched figure still more, bowed, and was about to say something, but she put her hands to her mouth and coughed so convulsively that Nekhlyúdov did not wait for the answer, and walked into the hut.

Yukhvánka, who was sitting in the red[1] corner on a bench, rushed to the oven the moment he espied the master, as if trying to hide from him; he hastily pushed something on the beds, and twitching his mouth and eyes, pressed against the wall, as if to make way for the master.

Yukhvánka was a blond, about thirty years of age, spare, slender, with a young beard that ran down to a point; he would have been a handsome man but for his

[1] The best corner, corresponding to a sitting-room, is called "red."

fleeting hazel eyes which looked unpleasantly beneath his wrinkled brows, and for the absence of two front teeth, which was very noticeable because his lips were short and in continuous motion. He was clad in a holiday shirt with bright red gussets, striped calico drawers, and heavy boots with wrinkled boot-legs.

The interior of Yukhvánka's hut was not so small and gloomy as Churís's, though it was as close, and smelled of smoke and sheepskins, and the peasant clothes and utensils were scattered about in the same disorderly fashion. Two things strangely arrested the attention: a small dented samovár, which stood on a shelf, and a black frame with a remnant of a glass, and a portrait of a general in a red uniform, which was hanging near the images.

Nekhlyúdov looked with dissatisfaction at the samovár, at the general's portrait, and at the beds, where from under a rag peeped out the end of a brass-covered pipe, and turned to the peasant.

"Good morning, Epifán," he said, looking into his eyes.

Epifán bowed, and mumbled, "We wish you health, 'r Grace," pronouncing the last words with peculiar tenderness, and his eyes in a twinkle surveyed the whole form of the master, the hut, the floor, and the ceiling, not stopping at anything; then he hurriedly walked up to the beds, pulled down a coat from them, and began to put it on.

"Why are you dressing yourself?" said Nekhlyúdov, seating himself on a bench, and obviously trying to look as stern as possible at Epifán.

"Please, 'r Grace, how can I? It seems to me we know —"

"I came in to see why you must sell a horse, how many horses you have, and what horse it is you want to sell," dryly said the master, evidently repeating questions prepared in advance.

"We are well satisfied with 'r Grace, because you have

deigned to call on me, a peasant," replied Yukhvánka, casting rapid glances at the general's portrait, at the oven, at the master's boots, and at all objects except Nekhlyúdov's face. "We always pray God for 'r Grace — "

"Why are you selling a horse?" repeated Nekhlyúdov, raising his voice, and clearing his throat.

Yukhvánka sighed, shook his hair (his glance again surveyed the whole hut), and, noticing the cat that had been quietly purring on a bench, he called out to her, "Scat, you scamp!" and hurriedly turned to the master. "The horse, 'r Grace, which is useless — If it were a good animal I would not sell it, 'r Grace."

"How many horses have you in all?"

"Three, 'r Grace."

"Have you any colts?"

"Why, yes, 'r Grace! I have one colt."

VIII.

"Come, show me your horses! Are they in the yard?"

"Yes, 'r Grace. I have done as I have been ordered to, 'r Grace. Would we dare to disobey 'r Grace? Yákov Alpátych commanded me not to let the horses out to pasture for the next day, as the prince wanted to inspect them, so we did not let them out. We do not dare disobey 'r Grace."

As Nekhlyúdov walked out of the door, Yukhvánka got the pipe down from the beds, and threw it behind the oven. His lips quivered just as restlessly, though the master was not looking at him.

A lean gray mare was rummaging through some musty hay under the shed; a two-months-old, long-legged colt of an indefinable colour, with bluish feet and mouth, did not leave her mother's thin tail that was all stuck up with burrs. In the middle of the yard stood, blinking and pensively lowering his head, a thick-bellied chestnut gelding, apparently a good peasant horse.

"Are these all your horses?"

"By no means, 'r Grace. Here is a little mare and a little colt," answered Yukhvánka, pointing to the horses which the master could not help having noticed.

"I see that. Now, which one do you want to sell?"

"This one, 'r Grace," he answered, waving with the flap of his coat in the direction of the drowsy gelding, continually blinking, and twitching his lips. The gelding opened his eyes and lazily turned his back to him.

"He does not look old, and is apparently a sound horse," said Nekhlyúdov. "Catch him, and show me his teeth! I will find out if he is old."

"It is impossible for one person to catch him, 'r Grace. The whole beast is not worth a penny. He has a temper: he bites and kicks, 'r Grace," answered Yukhvánka, smiling merrily, and turning his eyes in all directions.

"What nonsense! Catch him, I tell you!"

Yukhvánka smiled for a long time, and shuffled his feet, and not until Nekhlyúdov cried out in anger, "Well, will you?" did he run under the shed and bring a halter. He began to run after the horse, frightening him, and walking up to him from behind, and not in front.

The young master was evidently disgusted, and, no doubt, wanted to show his agility. "Give me the halter!" he said.

"I pray, 'r Grace! How can you? —"

But Nekhlyúdov walked up to the horse's head and, suddenly taking hold of his ears, bent it down with such a force that the gelding, who, as could be seen, was a very gentle peasant horse, tottered and groaned, in his attempt to tear himself away. When Nekhlyúdov noticed that it was unnecessary to use such force, and when he glanced at Yukhvánka, who did not cease smiling, the thought, so offensive at his years, occurred to him that Yukhvánka was making fun of him and mentally regarding him as a child. He blushed, let the horse go, and without the help of a halter opened his mouth and examined his teeth: the teeth were sound, the crowns full, and the young proprietor was enough informed to know that all this meant that the horse was young.

Yukhvánka, in the meantime, had gone under the shed, and, noticing that the harrow was not in place, he lifted it and put it on edge against the fence.

"Come here!" cried the master, with an expression of

childlike annoyance on his face, and almost with tears of mortification and anger in his voice. "Well, you call that an old horse?"

"I pray, 'r Grace, he is very old, some twenty years old — some horses —"

"Silence! You are a liar and a good-for-nothing, because an honest peasant would not lie, — he has no cause to lie!" said Nekhlyúdov, choking with tears of anger, which rose in his throat. He grew silent in order not to burst out into tears, and thus disgrace himself before the peasant. Yukhvánka, too, was silent, and, with the expression of a man who is ready to burst into tears, snuffled and slightly jerked his head.

"Well, with what animal will you plough your field when you have sold this horse?" continued Nekhlyúdov, having calmed down sufficiently to speak in his customary voice. "You are purposely sent to do work on foot, so as to give your horses a chance to improve for the ploughing, and you want to sell your last horse. But, the main thing is, why do you lie?"

The moment the master grew calm, Yukhvánka quieted down, too. He stood straight, and, still jerking his lips, let his eyes flit from one object to another.

"We will drive out to work, 'r Grace," he replied, "not worse than the rest."

"What will you drive with?"

"Do not worry, we will do the work of 'r Grace," he answered, shouting to the gelding, and driving him away. "I should not have thought of selling him if I did not need the money."

"What do you need the money for?"

"There is no bread, 'r Grace, and I have to pay my debts to the peasants, 'r Grace."

"How so, no bread? How is it the others, who have families, have bread, and you, who have none, have not any? What has become of your grain?"

"We have eaten it up, and now not a crumb is left. I will buy a horse in the fall, 'r Grace."

"You shall not dare sell this horse!"

"If so, 'r Grace, what kind of a life will it be? There is no bread, and I must not sell anything," he answered sideways, twitching his lips, and suddenly casting a bold glance upon the master's face. "It means, we shall have to starve."

"Look here, man!" cried Nekhlyúdov, pale with anger, and experiencing a feeling of personal hatred for the peasant. "I will not keep such peasants as you. It will go hard with you."

"Such will be your will, 'r Grace," he answered, covering his eyes with a feigned expression of humility, "if I have not served you right. And yet, nobody has noticed any vices in me. Of course, if 'r Grace is displeased with me, 'r Grace will do as you wish; only I do not know why I should suffer."

"I will tell you why: because your yard is not fenced in, your manure not ploughed up, your fences are broken, and you sit at home and smoke a pipe, and do not work; because you do not give your mother, who has turned the whole farm over to you, a piece of bread, and permit your wife to strike her, and have treated her so badly that she has come to me to complain about you."

"I beg your pardon, 'r Grace, I do not know what pipes you are speaking of," Yukhvánka answered, confusedly, apparently very much insulted by the accusation of smoking a pipe. "It is easy to say anything about a man."

"There you are lying again! I saw myself —"

"How would I dare to lie to 'r Grace?"

Nekhlyúdov was silent, and, biting his lips, paced the yard. Yukhvánka stood in one spot and, without raising his eyes, watched his master's feet.

"Listen, Epifán," said Nekhlyúdov, in a voice of childlike gentleness, stopping in front of the peasant, and en-

deavouring to conceal his agitation. "Bethink yourself. If you want to be a good peasant, you must change your life: leave your bad habits, stop lying, give up drinking, and honour your mother. I know all about you. Attend to your farm, and stop stealing timber in the Crown forest and frequenting the tavern! What good is there in it, think! If you have need of anything, come to me, ask straight out for what you need, and tell why you need it, and do not lie, but tell the whole truth, and I will not refuse you anything I can do for you."

"If you please, 'r Grace, we can understand 'r Grace!" answered Yukhvánka, smiling, as if fully comprehending the charm of the master's jest.

This smile and reply completely disappointed Nekhlyúdov, who had hoped to touch the peasant and bring him back on the true path by persuasion. And then, it seemed improper for him, who was possessed of power, to persuade his peasant, and it seemed, too, that everything he said was not exactly what he ought to have said. He lowered his head in sadness and walked into the vestibule. The old woman was sitting on the threshold and groaning aloud, in order, as it seemed, to express her sympathy with the master's words which she had heard.

"Here is some money for bread," Nekhlyúdov whispered into her ear, putting a bill into her hand. "Only buy for yourself, and do not give it to Yukhvánka, who will spend it in drinks."

The old woman took hold of the lintel with her bony hand, in order to rise and thank the master, and her head began to shake, but Nekhlyúdov was on the other side of the street when she rose.

IX.

"Davýdka the White asked for grain and posts," it said in the note-book after Yukhvánka.

After passing several huts, Nekhlyúdov, in turning into a lane, met his steward, Yákov Alpátych, who, upon noticing his master at a distance, doffed his oilcloth cap, and, taking out his fulled handkerchief, began to wipe his fat, red face.

"Put it on, Yákov! Yákov, put it on, I tell you —"

"Where have you been, your Grace?" asked Yákov, protecting himself with his cap against the sun, but not donning it.

"I have been at Yukhvánka the Shrewd's. Tell me, if you please, what has made him so bad," said the master, continuing on his way.

"Why so, your Grace?" replied the manager, following the master at a respectful distance. He had put on his cap and was twirling his moustache.

"Why? He is a thorough scamp, a lazy man, a thief, a liar; he torments his mother, and, so far as I can see, he is such a confirmed good-for-nothing that he will never reform."

"I do not know, your Grace, why he has displeased you so much —"

"And his wife," the master interrupted his manager, "seems to be a worthless wench. The old woman is clad worse than a mendicant, and has nothing to eat, but she is all dressed up, and so is he. I really do not know what to do with them."

Yákov was obviously embarrassed when Nekhlyúdov spoke of Yukhvánka's wife.

"Well, if he has acted like that, your Grace," he began, "we must find means. It is true he is indigent, like all peasants who are alone, but he is taking some care of himself, not like the others. He is a clever and intelligent peasant, and passably honest. He always comes when the capitation tax is collected. And he has been elder for three years, during my administration, and no fault was found with him. In the third year it pleased the guardian to depose him, and then he attended properly to his farm. It is true, when he lived at the post in town, he used to drink a bit, — and measures must be taken. When he went on a spree, we threatened him, and he came back to his senses: he was then all right, and in his family there was peace; but if you are not pleased to take these measures, I really do not know what to do with him. Well, he has got very low. He is not fit to be sent into the army again because, as you may have noticed, he lacks two teeth. But he is not the only one, I take the liberty of reporting to you, who is not in the least afraid — "

"Let this alone, Yákov," answered Nekhlyúdov, softly smiling; "we have talked it over often enough. You know what I think of it, and I shall not change my mind, whatever you may tell me."

"Of course, your Grace, all this is known to you," said Yákov, shrugging his shoulders and gazing at the master's back, as though what he saw did not promise anything good. "But as to your troubling yourself about the old woman, it is all in vain," he continued. "It is true she has brought up the orphans, has raised and married off Yukhvánka, and all that. But it is a common rule with the peasants that when a father or mother transfers the farm to the son, the son and daughter-in-law become the masters, and the old woman has to earn her bread as best she can. Of course they have not any tender feelings, but

that is the common rule among peasants. And I take the liberty of informing you that the old woman has troubled you in vain. She is a clever old woman and a good housekeeper; but why should she trouble the master for everything? I will admit she may have quarrelled with her daughter-in-law, and the daughter-in-law may have pushed her, — those are women's affairs. They might have made up again, without her troubling you. You deign to take it too much to heart," said the manager, looking with a certain gentleness and condescension at the master, who was silently walking, with long steps, up the street in front of him.

"Homeward bound, sir?" he asked.

"No, to Davýdka the White, or Kozlóv: is not that his name?"

"He, too, is a good-for-nothing, permit me to inform you. The whole tribe of the Kozlóvs is like that. No matter what you may do with them, it has no effect. I drove yesterday over the peasant field, and I saw he had not sowed any buckwheat; what are we to do with such a lot? If only the old man taught the son, but he is just such a good-for-nothing: he bungles everything, whether he works for himself or for the manor. The guardian and I have tried everything with him: we have sent him to the commissary's office, and have punished him at home, — but you do not like that —"

"Whom, the old man?"

"The old man, sir. The guardian has punished him often, and at the full gatherings of the Commune; but will you believe it, your Grace, it had no effect: he just shook himself, and went away, and did the same. And I must say, Davýdka is a peaceful peasant, and not at all stupid: he does not smoke, nor drink, that is," explained Yákov, "he does something worse than drink. All there is left to do is to send him to the army, or to Siberia, and nothing else. The whole tribe of the Kozlóvs is like that.

Matryúshka, who lives in that hovel, also belongs to their family, and is the same kind of an accursed good-for-nothing. So you do not need me, your Grace?" added the manager, noticing that the master was not listening to him.

"No, you may go," Nekhlyúdov answered, absent-mindedly, and directed his steps to Davýdka the White.

Davýdka's hut stood crooked and alone at the edge of the village. Near it was no yard, no kiln, no barn; only a few dirty stalls clung to one side of it: on the other were heaped in a pile wattles and timber that were to be used for the yard. Tall, green steppe-grass grew in the place where formerly had been the yard. There was not a living being near the hut, except a pig that lay in the mud in front of the threshold, and squealed.

Nekhlyúdov knocked at the broken window; but, as nobody answered him, he walked up to the vestibule and shouted: "Ho there!" Nobody replied. He walked through the vestibule, looked into the empty stalls, and walked through the open door into the hut.

An old red cock and two hens promenaded over the floor and benches, jerking their crops, and clattering with their claws. When they saw a man, they fluttered with wide-spread wings against the walls with a clucking of despair, and one of them flew upon the oven.

The eighteen-foot hut was all occupied by the oven with a broken pipe, a weaver's loom which had not been removed in spite of summer, and a begrimed table with a warped and cracked board. Though it was dry without, there was a dirty puddle near the threshold which had been formed at a previous rain by a leak in the ceiling and roof. There were no beds. It was hard to believe that this was an inhabited place, there was such a decided aspect of neglect and disorder, both inside and outside the hut; and yet Davýdka the White lived in it with his whole family. At that particular moment, in spite of the heat of the June day, Davýdka lay, his

head wrapped in a sheepskin half-coat, on the corner of the oven, fast asleep. The frightened hen, which had alighted on the oven and had not yet calmed down, was walking over Davýdka's back, without waking him.

Not finding any one in the hut, Nekhlyúdov was on the point of leaving, when a protracted, humid sigh betrayed the peasant.

"Oh, who is there?" cried the master.

On the oven was heard another protracted sigh.

"Who is there? Come here!"

Another sigh, a growl, and a loud yawn were the answer to the master's call.

"Well, will you come?"

Something stirred on the oven. There appeared the flap of a worn-out sheepskin; a big foot in a torn bast shoe came down, then another, and finally the whole form of Davýdka the White sat up on the oven, and lazily and discontentedly rubbed his eyes with his large fist. He slowly bent his head, yawned, gazed at the hut, and, when he espied the master, began to turn around a little faster than before, but still so leisurely that Nekhlyúdov had sufficient time to pace three times the distance from the puddle to the loom, before Davýdka got off the oven.

Davýdka the White was actually white; his hair, his body, and face, — everything was exceedingly white. He was tall and very stout, that is, stout like a peasant, with his whole body, and not merely with his belly; but it was a flabby, unhealthy obesity. His fairly handsome face, with its dark blue, calm eyes and broad, long beard, bore the imprint of infirmity. There was neither tan nor ruddiness in his face; it was of a pale, sallow complexion, with a light violet shade under his eyes, and looked suffused with fat, and swollen. His hands were swollen and sallow, like those of people who suffer with the dropsy, and were covered with fine white hair. He

was so sleepy that he could not open his eyes wide, nor stand still, without tottering and yawning.

"Are you not ashamed," began Nekhlyúdov, "to sleep in bright daylight, when you ought to build a yard, and when you have no grain?"

As soon as Davýdka came to his senses, and began to understand that the master was standing before him, he folded his hands over his abdomen, lowered his head, turning it a little to one side, and did not stir a limb. He was silent; but the expression of his face and the attitude of his whole form said, "I know, I know, it is not the first time I hear that. Beat me if you must, — I will bear it."

It looked as though he wanted the master to stop talking and to start beating him at once; to strike him hard on his cheeks, but to leave him in peace as soon as possible.

When Nekhlyúdov noticed that Davýdka did not understand him, he tried with various questions to rouse the peasant from his servile and patient silence.

"Why did you ask me for timber when you have had some lying here for a month, and that, too, when you have most time your own, eh?"

Davýdka kept stubborn silence, and did not stir.

"Well, answer!"

Davýdka muttered something, and blinked with his white eyelashes.

"But you must work, my dear: what will happen without work? Now, you have no grain, and why? Because your land is badly ploughed, and has not been harrowed, and was sowed in too late, — all on account of laziness. You ask me for grain: suppose I give it to you, because you must not starve! It will not do to act in this way. Whose grain am I giving you? What do you think, whose? Answer me: whose grain am I giving you?" Nekhlyúdov stubbornly repeated his question.

"The manorial," mumbled Davýdka, timidly and questioningly raising his eyes.

"And where does the manorial grain come from? Think of it: who has ploughed the field? Who has harrowed it? Who has sowed it in, and garnered it? The peasants? Is it not so? So you see, if I am to give the manorial grain to the peasants, I ought to give more to those who have worked more for it; but you have worked less, and they complain of you at the manor; you have worked less, and you ask more. Why should I give to you, and not to others? If all were lying on their sides and sleeping, as you are doing, we should all have starved long ago. We must work, my friend, but this is bad, — do you hear, Davýd?"

"I hear, sir," he slowly muttered through his teeth.

X.

Just then the head of a peasant woman carrying linen on a yoke flashed by the window, and a minute later Davýdka's mother entered the hut. She was a tall woman of about fifty years, and was well preserved and active. Her pockmarked and wrinkled face was not handsome, but her straight, firm nose, her compressed thin lips, and her keen gray eyes expressed intelligence and energy. The angularity of her shoulders, the flatness of her bosom, the bony state of her hands, and the well-developed muscles on her black bare feet witnessed to the fact that she had long ceased to be a woman, and was only a labourer.

She entered boldly into the room, closed the door, pulled down her skirt, and angrily looked at her son. Nekhlyúdov wanted to tell her something, but she turned away from him, and began to make the signs of the cross before a black wooden image that peered out from behind the loom. Having finished her devotion, she straightened out her dirty checkered kerchief in which her head was wrapped, and made a low obeisance before the master.

"A pleasant Lord's Day to your Grace," she said. "May God preserve you, our father — !"

When Davýdka saw his mother he evidently became embarrassed, bent his back a little, and lowered his neck even more.

"Thank you, Arína," answered Nekhlyúdov. "I have just been speaking with your son about your farm."

Arína, or, as the peasants had called her when she was still a maiden, Aríshka-Burlák,[1] supported her chin with the fist of her right hand, which, in its turn, was resting on the palm of her left hand; and, without hearing what the master had still to say, began to speak in such a penetrating and loud voice that the whole hut was filled with sound, and in the street it might have appeared that several women were speaking at the same time.

"What use, father, is there of speaking to him? He can't even speak like a man. There he stands, blockhead," she continued, contemptuously pointing with her head to Davýdka's wretched, massive figure. "My farm, your Grace? We are mendicants; there are no people in your whole village more wretched: we have neither of our own, nor anything for the manorial dues — a shame! He has brought us to all this. I bore him, raised, and fed him, and with anticipation waited for him to grow up. Here he is: the grain is bursting, but there is no more work in him than in this rotten log. All he knows how to do is to lie on the oven, or to stand and scratch his stupid head," she said, mocking him. "If you, father, could threaten him somehow! I beg you: punish him for the Lord's sake; send him to the army, and make an end of it. I have lost my patience with him, I tell you."

"How is it you are not ashamed, Davýdka, to bring your mother to such a state?" said Nekhlyúdov, reproachfully turning to the peasant.

Davýdka did not budge.

"It would be different if he were a sickly man," Arína continued, with the same vivacity and gestures, "but you look at him, he is fatter than a mill pig. He is a good-looking chap, fit enough to work! But no, he lies like a lubber all day on the oven. My eyes get tired looking when he undertakes to do something; when he rises, or

[1] Burlák is a labourer towing boats up the Vólga.

moves, or anything," she said, drawling her words and awkwardly turning her angular shoulders from side to side. "Now, for example, to-day the old man has gone for brushwood into the forest, and he has told him to dig holes; but no, not he, he has not had the spade in his hands—" She grew silent for a moment. "He has undone me, abandoned woman!" she suddenly whined, waving her hands, and walking up to her son with a threatening gesture. "Your smooth, good-for-nothing snout, the Lord forgive me!"

She turned away contemptuously and in despair from him, spit out, and again turned to the master, continuing to wave her hands, with the same animation and with tears in her eyes:

"I am all alone, benefactor. My old man is sick and old, and there is little good in him, and I am all sole alone. It is enough to make a stone burst. It would be easier if I just could die; that would be the end. He has worn me out, that rascal! Our father! I have no more strength! My daughter-in-law died from work, and I shall, too."

XI.

"WHAT, died?" Nekhlyúdov asked, incredulously.

"She died from exertion, benefactor, as God is holy. We took her two years ago from Babúrin," she continued, suddenly changing her angry expression to one of tearfulness and sadness. "She was a young, healthy, obedient woman, father. She had lived, as a maiden, in plenty, at her father's home, and had experienced no want; but when she came to us, and had to do the work, — in the manor and at home, and everywhere — She and I, that was all there was. To me it did not matter much. I am used to it, but she was pregnant, and began to suffer; and she worked all the while beyond her strength, until she, my dear girl, overworked herself. Last year, during St. Peter's Fast, she, to her misfortune, bore a boy, and there was no bread; we barely managed to pick up something, father; the hard work was on hand, and her breasts dried up. It was her first-born, there was no cow, and we are peasant people, and it is not for us to bring up children on the bottle; and, of course, she was a foolish woman, and worried her life away. And when her baby died, she cried and cried from sorrow, and sobbed and sobbed, my darling, and there was want, and work, ever worse and worse; she wore herself out all summer, and died, my darling, on the day of St. Mary's Intercession. It is he who has undone her, beast!" She again turned to her son with the anger of despair. "I wanted to ask you, your Grace," she continued after a short silence, lowering her head, and bowing.

"What is it?" Nekhlyúdov asked absent-mindedly, still agitated by her recital.

"He is a young man yet. You can't expect much work from me; to-day I am alive, to-morrow dead. How can he be without a wife? He will not be a peasant, if he is not married. Have pity on us, father."

"That is, you want to marry him off? Well?"

"Do us this favour before God! You are our father and mother."

She gave her son a sign, and both dropped on the ground before their master's feet.

"Why do you make these earth obeisances?" said Nekhlyúdov, angrily raising her by her shoulder. "Can't you tell it without doing so? You know that I do not like it. Marry off your son, if you wish. I should be glad to hear that you have a bride in view."

The old woman rose, and began to wipe off her dry eyes with her sleeve. Davýdka followed her example, and, having wiped his eyes with his dry fist, continued to stand in the same patient and subservient attitude as before, and to listen to what Arína was saying.

"There is a bride, why not? Mikhéy's Vasyútka is a likely enough girl, but she will not marry him without your will."

"Does she not consent?"

"No, benefactor, not if it comes to consenting."

"Well, then what is to be done? I cannot compel her; look for another girl, if not here, elsewhere; I will buy her out, as long as she will give her own consent, but you can't marry by force. There is no law for that, and it would be a great sin."

"O benefactor! But is it likely that any girl would be willing to marry him, seeing our manner of life and poverty? Even a soldier's wife would not wish to take upon herself such misery. What peasant will be willing to give his daughter to us? The most desperate man will

not give his. We are mendicants, and nothing else. They will say that we have starved one woman, and would do so with their daughter. Who will give his?" she added, skeptically shaking her head. "Consider this, your Grace."

"But what can I do?"

"Think of some plan for us, father!" Arína repeated, persuasively. "What are we to do?"

"What plan can I find? I can do nothing for you in this matter."

"Who will do something for us, if not you?" said Arína, dropping her head, and waving her hands with an expression of sad perplexity.

"You have asked for grain, and I will order it to be given to you," said the master, after a short silence, during which Arína drew deep breaths and Davýdka seconded her. "That is all I can do."

Nekhlyúdov stepped into the vestibule. The woman and her son followed the master, bowing.

XII.

"O MY orphanhood!" said Arína, drawing a deep breath.

She stopped, and angrily looked at her son. Davýdka immediately wheeled around and, with difficulty lifting his fat leg, in an immense dirty bast shoe, over the threshold, was lost in the opposite door.

"What am I going to do with him, father?" continued Arína, turning to the master. "You see yourself what he is! He is not a bad peasant: he does not drink, is peaceful, and would not harm a child, — it would be a sin to say otherwise; there is nothing bad about him, and God only knows what it is that has befallen him that he has become his own enemy. He himself is not satisfied with it. Really, father, it makes my heart bleed when I see how he worries about it himself. Such as he is, my womb has borne him; I am sorry, very sorry for him! He would do no harm to me, or his father, or the authorities; he is a timid man, I might say, like a child. How can he remain a widower? Do something for us, benefactor," she repeated, evidently trying to correct the bad impression which her scolding might have produced on the master. "Your Grace," she continued, in a confidential whisper, "I have reasoned this way and that way, but I can't make out what has made him so. It cannot be otherwise but that evil people have bewitched him."

She was silent for a moment.

"If the man could be found, he might be cured."

"What nonsense you are talking, Arína! How can one bewitch?"

"Father, they can bewitch so as to make one a no-man for all his life! There are many evil people in the world! Out of malice they take out a handful of earth in one's track — or something else — and one is a no-man for ever. It is easy to sin! I have been thinking of going to see old man Dundúk, who lives at Vorobévka: he knows all kinds of incantations, and he knows herbs, and he takes away the evil eye, and draws the dropsy out of the spine. Maybe he will help!" said the woman. "Maybe he will cure him!"

"Now that is wretchedness and ignorance!" thought the young master, sorrowfully bending his head, and walking with long strides down the village. "What shall I do with him? It is impossible to leave him in this state, on my account, and as an example for others, and for his own sake," he said to himself, counting out the causes on his fingers. "I cannot see him in this condition, but how am I to take him out of it? He destroys all my best plans for the estate. If such peasants are left in it, my dreams will never be fulfilled," he thought, experiencing mortification and anger against the peasant for destroying his plans. "Shall I send him as a settler to Siberia, as Yákov says, when he does not want to be well off, or into the army? That's it. I shall at least be rid of him, and shall thus save a good peasant," he reflected.

He thought of it with delight; at the same time a certain indistinct consciousness told him that he was thinking with one side of his reason only, and something was wrong. He stopped. "Wait, what am I thinking about?" he said to himself; "yes, into the army, to Siberia. For what? He is a good man, better than many others, and how do I know — Give him his liberty?" he reflected, considering the question not with one side of his reason

only, as before. "It is unjust, and impossible." Suddenly a thought came to him that gave him great pleasure; he smiled, with the expression of a man who has solved a difficult problem. "I will take him to the manor," he said to himself. "I will watch over him myself, and with gentleness and persuasion, and proper selection of occupations, accustom him to work, and reform him."

XIII.

"I WILL do so," Nekhlyúdov said to himself with cheerful self-satisfaction, and, recalling that he had to visit yet the rich peasant, Dutlóv, he directed his steps to a tall and spacious building, with two chimneys, which stood in the middle of the village. As he was getting near it, he met, near the neighbouring hut, a tall, slatternly woman, of some forty years of age, who came out to see him.

"A pleasant holiday, sir," the woman said, without the least timidity, stopping near him, smiling pleasantly, and bowing.

"Good morning, nurse," he answered. "How are you getting on? I am going to see your neighbour."

"Yes, your Grace, that is good. But why do you not deign to call on us? My old man would be ever so happy to see you."

"Well, I will come in, to talk with you, nurse. Is this your hut?"

"Yes, sir."

And the nurse ran ahead. Nekhlyúdov walked after her into the vestibule, sat down on a pail, took out a cigarette, and lighted it.

"It is hot there; let us stay here and talk," he answered to the nurse's invitation to walk into the hut.

The nurse was still in her prime, and a fine-looking woman. In her features, and especially in her large black eyes, there was a great resemblance to the master's face. She put her hands under her apron, and, boldly looking

at the master and continually shaking her head, began to speak with him:

"What is the reason, sir, you are honouring Dutlóv with a visit?"

"I want him to rent from me thirty desyatínas[1] of land, and start a farm of his own, and also to buy some timber with me. He has money, — why should it lie idle? What do you think about that, nurse?"

"Well! Of course, sir, the Dutlóvs are powerful people. I suppose he is the first peasant in the whole estate," answered the nurse, nodding her head. "Last year he added a new structure out of his own timber, — he did not trouble the master. Of horses, there will be some six sets of three, outside of colts and yearlings; and of stock, there are so many cows and sheep that when they drive them home from the field, and the women go out to drive them into the yard, there is a terrible crush at the gate; and of bees, there must be two hundred hives, and maybe more. He is a powerful peasant, he must have money, too."

"Do you think he has much money?" the master asked.

"People say, of course, out of malice, that the man has a great deal; naturally, he would not tell, nor would he let his sons know, but he must have. Why should he not put his money out for a forest? Unless he should be afraid to let out the rumour about having money. Some five years ago he invested a little money in bottom meadows with Shkálik the porter; but I think Shkálik cheated him, so that the old man was out of three hundred roubles; since then he has given it up. And why should he not be well fixed, your Grace," continued the nurse, "he is living on three parcels of land, the family is large, all workers, and the old man himself — there is nothing to be said against him — is a fine manager. He has luck in

[1] A desyatína is equal to 2,400 square fathoms.

everything, so that the people are all wondering; he has luck with the grain, with the horses, the cattle, the bees, and his children. He has married them all off. He found wives for them among his own, and now he has married Ilyúshka to a free girl, — he has himself paid for her emancipation. And she has turned out to be a fine woman."

"Do they live peaceably?" asked the master.

"As long as there is a real head in the house, there will be peace. Though with the Dutlóvs it is as elsewhere with women: the daughters-in-law quarrel behind the oven, yet the sons live peacefully together under the old man."

The nurse grew silent for a moment.

"Now the old man wants to make his eldest son, Karp, the master of the house. He says he is getting too old and that his business is with the bees. Well, Karp is a good man, an accurate man, but he will not be such a manager as the old man, by a good deal. He has not his intellect."

"Maybe Karp will be willing to take up land and forests, what do you think?" said the master, wishing to find out from his nurse what she knew about her neighbours.

"I doubt it, sir," continued the nurse; "the old man has not disclosed his money to his son. As long as the old man is alive, and the money is in his house, his mind will direct affairs; besides, they are more interested in teaming."

"And the old man will not consent?"

"He will be afraid."

"What will he be afraid of?"

"How can a manorial peasant declare his money, sir? There might be an unlucky hour, and all his money would be lost! There, he went into partnership with the porter, and he made a mistake. How could he sue him? And

thus the money was all lost; and with the proprietor it would be lost without appeal."

"Yes, on this account —" said Nekhlyúdov, blushing. "Good-bye, nurse."

"Good-bye, your Grace. I thank you humbly."

XIV.

"Had I not better go home?" thought Nekhlyúdov, walking up to Dutlóv's gate, and feeling an indefinable melancholy and moral fatigue.

Just then the new plank gate opened before him with a creak, and a fine-looking, ruddy, light-complexioned lad, of about eighteen years of age, in driver's attire, appeared in the gateway, leading behind him a set of three stout-legged, sweaty, shaggy horses; boldly shaking his flaxen hair, he bowed to the master.

"Is your father at home, Ilyá?" asked Nekhlyúdov.

"He is with the bees, back of the yard," answered the lad, leading one horse after another through the half-open gate.

"No, I will stick to my determination; I will make the proposition to him, and will do my part," thought Nekhlyúdov, and, letting the horses pass by, he went into Dutlóv's spacious yard. He could see that the manure had lately been removed: the earth was still black and sweaty, and in places, particularly near the gate, lay scattered red-fibred shreds. In the yard, and under the high sheds, stood in good order many carts, ploughs, sleighs, blocks, tubs, and all kinds of peasant possessions. Pigeons flitted to and fro and cooed in the shade under the broad, solid rafters. There was an odour of manure and tar.

In one corner Karp and Ignát were fixing a new transom-bed on a large, three-horse, steel-rimmed cart. Dutlóv's three sons resembled each other very much. The

youngest, Ilyá, whom Nekhlyúdov had met in the gate, had no beard, and was smaller, ruddier, and more foppishly clad than the other two. The second, Ignát, was taller, more tanned, had a pointed beard, and, although he too wore boots, a driver's shirt, and a lambskin cap, he did not have the careless, holiday aspect of his younger brother. The eldest, Karp, was taller still, wore bast shoes, a gray caftan, and a shirt without gussets; he had a long red beard, and looked not only solemn, but even gloomy.

"Do you command me to send for father, your Grace?" he said, walking up to the master and bowing slightly and awkwardly.

"No, I will go myself to the apiary; I wish to look at his arrangement of it; but I want to talk with you," said Nekhlyúdov, walking over to the other end of the yard, so that Ignát might not hear what he was going to say to Karp.

The self-confidence and a certain pride, which were noticeable in the whole manner of these two peasants, and that which his nurse had told him, so embarrassed the young master that he found it hard to make up his mind to tell him of the matter in hand. He felt as though he were guilty of something; and it was easier for him to speak to one of the brothers, without being heard by the other. Karp looked somewhat surprised at being asked by the master to step aside, but he followed him.

"It is this," began Nekhlyúdov, hesitating, "I wanted to ask you how many horses you had."

"There will be some five sets of three; there are also some colts," Karp answered, freely, scratching his back.

"Do your brothers drive the stage?"

"We drive the stage with three tróykas. Ilyúshka has been doing some hauling; he has just returned."

"Do you find that profitable? How much do you earn in this manner?"

"What profit can there be, your Grace? We just feed ourselves and the horses, and God be thanked for that."

"Then why do you not busy yourselves with something else? You might buy some forest or rent some land."

"Of course, your Grace, we might rent some land, if it came handy."

"This is what I want to propose to you. What is the use of teaming, just to earn your feed, when you can rent some thirty desyatínas of me? I will let you have the whole parcel which lies behind Sápov's, and you can start a large farm."

Nekhlyúdov was now carried away by his plan of a peasant farm, which he had thought over and recited to himself more than once, and he began to expound to Karp, without stammering, his plan of a peasant farm. Karp listened attentively to the words of the master.

"We are very well satisfied with your favour," he said, when Nekhlyúdov stopped and looked at him, expecting an answer. "Of course, there is nothing bad in this. It is better for a peasant to attend to the soil than to flourish his whip. Peasants of our kind get easily spoilt, when they travel among strange men, and meet all kinds of people. There is nothing better for a peasant than to busy himself with the land."

"What do you think of it, then?"

"As long as father is alive, your Grace, there is no use in my thinking. His will decides."

"Take me to the apiary; I will talk to him."

"This way, if you please," said Karp, slowly turning toward the barn in the back of the yard. He opened a low gate which led to the beehives, and, letting the master walk through it, and closing it, he walked up to Ignát, and resumed his interrupted work.

XV.

Nekhlyúdov bent his head, and passed through the low gate underneath the shady shed to the apiary, which was back of the yard. The small space, surrounded by straw and a wicker fence which admitted the sunlight, where stood symmetrically arranged the beehives, covered with small boards, and surrounded by golden bees circling noisily about them, was all bathed in the hot, brilliant rays of the June sun.

A well-trodden path led from the gate through the middle of the apiary to a wooden-roofed cross with a brass-foil image upon it, which shone glaringly in the sun. A few stately linden-trees, which towered with their curly tops above the straw thatch of the neighbouring yard, rustled their fresh dark green foliage almost inaudibly, on account of the buzzing of the bees. All the shadows from the roofed fence, from the lindens, and from the beehives that were covered with boards, fell black and short upon the small, wiry grass that sprouted between the hives.

The small, bent form of an old man, with his uncovered gray, and partly bald, head shining in the sun, was seen near the door of a newly thatched, moss-calked plank building, which was situated between the lindens. Upon hearing the creaking of the gate, the old man turned around and, wiping off his perspiring, sunburnt face with the skirt of his shirt, and smiling gently and joyfully, came to meet the master.

The apiary was so cosy, so pleasant, so quiet, and so

sunlit; the face of the gray-haired old man, with the abundant ray-like wrinkles about his eyes, in his wide shoes over his bare feet, who, waddling along and smiling good-naturedly and contentedly, welcomed the master in his exclusive possessions, was so simple-hearted and kind, that Nekhlyúdov immediately forgot the heavy impressions of the morning, and his favourite dream rose up before him. He saw all his peasants just as rich and good-natured as old Dutlóv, and all smiled kindly and joyously at him, because they owed to him alone all their wealth and happiness.

"Will you not have a net, your Grace? The bees are angry now, and they sting," said the old man, taking down from the fence a dirty linen bag fragrant with honey, which was sewed to a bark hoop, and offering it to the master. "The bees know me, and do not sting me," he added, with a gentle smile, which hardly ever left his handsome, sunburnt face.

"Then I shall not need it, either. Well, are they swarming already?" asked Nekhlyúdov, also smiling, though he knew not why.

"They are swarming, Father Dmítri Nikoláevich," answered the old man, wishing to express his especial kindness by calling his master by his name and patronymic, "but they have just begun to do it properly. It has been a cold spring, you know."

"I have read in a book," began Nekhlyúdov, warding off a bee that had lost itself in his hair, and was buzzing over his very ear, "that when the combs are placed straight on little bars, the bees begin to swarm earlier. For this purpose they make hives out of boards — with cross-bea— "

"Please do not wave your hand, it will make it only worse," said the old man. "Had I not better give you the net?"

Nekhlyúdov was experiencing pain, but a certain child-

ish conceit prevented him from acknowledging it; he again refused the net, and continued to tell the old man about the construction of beehives, of which he had read in the "Maison Rustique," and in which the bees, according to his opinion, would swarm twice as much; but a bee stung his neck, and he stopped confused in the middle of his argument.

"That is so, Father Dmítri Nikoláevich," said the old man, glancing at the master with fatherly condescension, "they write so in books. But they may write so maliciously. 'Let him do,' they probably say, 'as we write, and we will have the laugh on him.' I believe that is possible! For how are you going to teach the bees where to build their combs? They fix them in the hollow blocks as they please, sometimes crossways, and at others straight. Look here, if you please," he added, uncorking one of the nearest blocks, and looking through the opening, which was covered with buzzing and creeping bees along the crooked combs. "Now here, these young ones, they have their mind on a queen bee, but they build the comb straightways and aslant, just as it fits best into the block," said the old man, obviously carried away by his favourite subject, and not noticing the master's condition. "They are coming heavily laden to-day, it is a warm day, and everything can be seen," he added, corking up the hive, and crushing a creeping bee with a rag, and then brushing off with his coarse hand a few bees from his wrinkled brow. The bees did not sting him. But Nekhlyúdov could no longer repress his desire to run out of the apiary; the bees had stung him in three places, and they were buzzing on all sides about his head and neck.

"Have you many hives?" he asked, retreating to the gate.

"As many as God has given," answered Dutlóv, smiling. "One must not count them, father! the bees do

not like that. Now, your Grace, I wanted to ask you," he continued, pointing to thin hives that stood near the fence, "in regard to Ósip, the nurse's husband. Could you not tell him to stop it? It is mean to act thus to a neighbour of your own village."

"What is mean? — But they do sting me!" answered the master, taking hold of the latch of the gate.

"Every year he lets out his bees against my young ones. They ought to have a chance to improve, but somebody else's bees steal their wax, and do other damage," said the old man, without noticing the master's grimaces.

"All right, later, directly," said Nekhlyúdov, and, unable to stand the pain any longer, he rushed out of the gate, defending himself with both hands.

"Rub it in with dirt; it will pass," said the old man, following the master into the yard. The master rubbed with dirt the place where he had been stung, blushingly looked at Karp and Ignát, who did not see him, and frowned angrily.

XVI.

"I WANTED to ask your Grace about my children," said the old man, accidentally or purposely paying no attention to the master's angry look.

"What?"

"Thank the Lord, we are well off for horses, and we have a hired man, so there will be no trouble about the manorial dues."

"What of it?"

"If you would be kind enough to let my sons substitute money payment for their manorial labour, Ilyúshka and Ignát would take out three tróykas to do some teaming all summer. They may be able to earn something."

"Where will they go?"

"Wherever it may be," replied Ilyúshka, who had in the meantime tied the horses under the shed, and had come up to his father. "The Kadmá boys took eight tróykas out to Rómen, and they made a good living, and brought back home thirty roubles for each tróyka; and they say fodder is cheap in Odessa."

"It is precisely this that I wanted to talk to you about," said the master, turning to the old man, and trying to introduce the discussion about the farm as deftly as possible. "Tell me, if you please, is it more profitable to do hauling than attend to a farm?"

"No end more profitable, your Grace!" again interrupted Ilyá, boldly shaking his hair. "There is no fodder at home to feed the horses with."

"Well, and how much do you expect to earn in a summer?"

"In the spring, when fodder was dreadfully expensive, we travelled to Kíev with goods; in Kursk we again took a load of grits for Moscow, and we made our living, the horses had enough to eat, and I brought fifteen roubles home."

"It is not a disgrace to have an honest trade," said the master, again turning to the old man, "but it seems to me one might find another occupation; besides, it is a kind of work where a young fellow travels about, sees all kinds of people, and gets easily spoilt," he said, repeating Karp's words.

"What are we peasants to take up, if not hauling?" answered the old man, with his gentle smile. "If you have a good job at teaming, you yourself have enough to eat, and so have the horses. And as to spoiling, thank the Lord, they are not hauling the first year; and I myself have done teaming, and have never seen anything bad, nothing but good."

"There are many things you might take up at home: land and meadows —"

"How can we, your Grace?" Ilyúshka interrupted him with animation. "We were born for this; we know all about it; the business is adapted to us, and we like it very much, your Grace, and there is nothing like teaming for us fellows."

"Your Grace, will you do us the honour to walk into the hut? You have not yet seen our new house," said the old man, bowing low, and winking to his son. Ilyúshka ran at full speed into the hut, and Nekhlyúdov followed him, with the old man.

XVII.

When they entered the hut, the old man bowed again, wiped off the bench in the front corner with the flap of his coat, and, smiling, asked:

"What may we serve to you, your Grace?"

The hut was white (with a chimney), spacious, and had both hanging and bench beds. The fresh aspen-wood beams, between which the moss-calking had just begun to fade, had not yet turned black; the new benches and beds had not yet become smooth, and the floor was not yet stamped down.

A young, haggard peasant woman, with an oval, pensive face, Ilyá's wife, was sitting on the bench-bed, and rocking with her foot a cradle that hung down from the ceiling by a long pole. In the cradle a suckling babe lay stretched out, and slept, barely breathing, and closing its eyes. Another, a plump, red-cheeked woman, Karp's wife, stood, with her sunburnt arms bared above the elbows, near the oven, and cut onions into a wooden bowl. A third, a pockmarked, pregnant woman, stood at the oven, shielding herself with her sleeve. The hut was hot, not only from the sun, but from the oven also, and was fragrant with freshly baked bread. From the hanging beds the flaxen heads of two boys and a girl, who had climbed there in expectation of dinner, looked down with curiosity at the master.

Nekhlyúdov was happy to see this well-being; but, at the same time, he felt embarrassed before these women

and children who gazed at him. He sat down on the bench, blushing.

"Give me a piece of warm bread, I like it," he said, and blushed even more.

Karp's wife cut off a big slice of bread, and handed it to the master on a plate. Nekhlyúdov was silent, not knowing what to say; the women were silent, too; the old man smiled gently.

"Really, what am I ashamed of? I am acting as though I were guilty of something," thought Nekhlyúdov. "Why should I not make the proposition about the farm to him? How foolish!" But still he kept silent.

"Well, Father Dmítri Nikoláevich, what will your order be about the boys?" said the old man.

"I should advise you not to send them away, but to find work for them here," suddenly spoke Nekhlyúdov, taking courage. "Do you know what I have thought out for you? Buy in partnership with me a young grove in the Crown forest, and fields —"

"How, your Grace? Where shall I get the money for it?" he interrupted the master.

"A small grove, for about two hundred roubles," remarked Nekhlyúdov.

The old man smiled angrily.

"It would not hurt to buy it if I had the money," he said.

"Do you mean to tell me you have not that amount?" said the master, reproachfully.

"Oh, your Grace!" answered the old man, in a sorrowful voice, looking at the door. "I have enough to do to feed the family, and it is not for me to buy groves."

"But you have money, and why should it lie idle?" insisted Nekhlyúdov.

The old man became greatly agitated; his eyes flashed, he began to shrug his shoulders.

"It may be evil people have told you something about

me," he spoke in a trembling voice, "but, as you believe in God," he said, becoming more and more animated, and turning his eyes to the image, "may my eyes burst, may I go through the floor, if I have anything outside of the fifteen roubles which Ilyúshka has brought me, and I must pay the capitation tax, and, you know yourself, I have just built a new hut —"

"All right, all right!" said the master, rising from the bench. "Good-bye, people!"

XVIII.

"My God! My God!" thought Nekhlyúdov, making his way with long strides to the house through the shady avenues of the weed-grown garden, and absent-mindedly tearing off leaves and branches on his way. "Is it possible all my dreams of the aims and duties of my life have been absurd? Why do I feel so oppressed and melancholy, as though I were dissatisfied with myself, whereas I had imagined that the moment I entered on the path, I would continually experience that fulness of a morally satisfied feeling which I had experienced when these thoughts came to me for the first time?"

He transferred himself, in imagination, with extraordinary vividness and clearness, a year back, to that blissful moment.

He had risen early in the morning before everybody in the house, painfully agitated by some secret, inexpressible impulses of youth; had aimlessly walked into the garden, thence into the forest; and, amidst the strong, luscious, but calm Nature of a May day, he had long wandered alone, without thought, suffering from an excess of some feeling, and unable to find an expression for it.

His youthful imagination, full of the charm of the unknown, represented to him the voluptuous image of a woman, and it seemed to him that this was the unexpressed desire. But another higher feeling said to him, "Not this," and compelled him to seek something else. Then again, his vivid imagination, rising higher and higher, into the sphere of abstractions, opened up to him,

as he thought, the laws of being, and he dwelt with proud delight upon these thoughts. And again a higher feeling said, "Not this," and again caused him to seek and be agitated.

Without ideas and desires, as always happens after an intensified activity, he lay down on his back under a tree, and began to gaze at the translucent morning clouds, which scudded above him over the deep, endless sky. Suddenly tears stood, without any cause, in his eyes, and, God knows how, there came to him the clear thought, which filled his soul, and which he seized with delight, — the thought that love and goodness were truth and happiness, and the only truth and possible happiness in the world. A higher feeling did not say, "Not this," and he arose, and began to verify his thought.

"It is, it is, yes!" he said to himself in ecstasy, measuring all his former convictions, all the phenomena of life, with the newly discovered and, as he thought, entirely new truth. "How stupid is all which I have known, and which I have believed in and loved," he said to himself. "Love, self-sacrifice, — these constitute the only true happiness which is independent of accident!" he repeated, smiling, and waving his hands. He applied this thought to life from every side, and he found its confirmation in life, and in the inner voice which told him, "It is this," and he experienced a novel feeling of joyful agitation and transport. "And thus, I must do good in order to be happy," he thought, and all his future was vividly pictured to him, not in the abstract, but in concrete form, in the shape of a landed proprietor.

He saw before him an immense field of action for his whole life, which he would henceforth devote to doing good, and in which he, consequently, would be happy. He would not have to look for a sphere of action: it was there; he had a direct duty, — he had peasants —

What refreshing and grateful labour his imagination

evoked: "To act upon this simple, receptive, uncorrupted class of people; to save them from poverty; to give them a sufficiency; to transmit to them the education which I enjoy through good fortune; to reform their vices which are the issue of ignorance and superstition; to develop their morality; to cause them to love goodness — What a brilliant and happy future! And I, who will be doing it all for my own happiness, shall enjoy their gratitude, and shall see how with every day I come nearer and nearer to the goal which I have set for myself. Enchanting future! How could I have failed to see it before?

"And besides," he thought at the same time, "who prevents my being happy in my love for a woman, in domestic life?"

And his youthful imagination painted a still more entrancing future to him.

"I and my wife, whom I love as no one in the world has ever loved, will always live amidst this tranquil, poetical country Nature, with our children, perhaps with an old aunt. We have a common love, the love for our children, and both of us know that our destiny is goodness. We help each other to walk toward this goal. I take general measures, furnish general and just assistance, start a farm, savings-banks, factories; but she, with her pretty little head, in a simple white dress, lifted over her dainty foot, walks through the mud to the peasant school, to the hospital, to some unfortunate peasant, who really does not deserve any aid, and everywhere she consoles and helps — The children and the old men and women worship her, and look upon her as upon an angel, a vision. Then she returns home, and she conceals from me that she has gone to see the unfortunate peasant, and has given him money; but I know everything, and I embrace her tightly, and firmly and tenderly kiss her charming eyes, her bashfully blushing cheeks, and her smiling ruddy lips —"

XIX.

"WHERE are these dreams?" now thought the youth, as he approached his house after his visits. "It is now more than a year that I have been seeking happiness upon this road, and what have I found? It is true, at times I feel that I might be satisfied with myself, but it is a kind of dry, mental satisfaction. Yes and no, I am simply dissatisfied with myself! I am dissatisfied because I have found no happiness here, and yet I wish, I passionately wish for happiness. I have not experienced enjoyment, and have already cut off from me everything which gives it. Why? For what? Who has been better off for it? My aunt was right when she said that it is easier to find happiness than to give it to others.

"Have my peasants grown richer? Have they been morally educated and developed? Not in the least. They are not better off, but I feel worse with every day. If I only saw any success in my undertaking, if I saw gratitude — but no, I see the perverted routine, vice, suspicion, helplessness.

"I am wasting in vain the best years of my life," he thought, and it occurred to him that his nurse had told him that his neighbours called him a "minor"; that there was no money left in his office; that the new threshing-machine, which he had invented, to the common delight of the peasants, only whistled but did not thresh, when it was for the first time set in motion in the threshing-barn, before a large audience; that from day to

day he might expect the arrival of the agrarian court in order to take an invoice of the estate, since he had allowed payments on the mortgage to lapse, in his preoccupation with all kinds of new farm undertakings.

And suddenly, just as vividly as before, came to him the picture of his walk through the forest, and the dream of a country life; and just as vividly stood before him his student room in Moscow, in which he used to stay up late at night, by one candle, with his classmate and adored sixteen-year-old friend. They read and recited for hours in succession some tiresome notes of civil law, and, after finishing them, sent for supper, pooled on a bottle of champagne, and talked of the future that was in store for them. How differently the future had presented itself to a young student! Then the future was full of enjoyment, of varied activities, of splendid successes, and incontestably led both of them to the highest good in the world, as it then was understood by them, — to fame!

"He is walking, and rapidly walking, on that road," thought Nekhlyúdov of his friend, "and I — "

At this time he had arrived at the entrance of the house, where ten or more peasants and domestics stood, waiting for the master with all kinds of requests, and he had to turn from his dreams to the reality before him.

Here was a ragged, dishevelled, and blood-stained peasant woman who complained in tears of her father-in-law, who, she said, wanted to kill her; here were two brothers who had been for two years quarrelling about the division of their farm, and who looked upon each other with desperate malice; here was also an unshaven, gray-haired servant, with hands quivering from intoxication, whom his son, the gardener, had brought to the master, to complain of his dissolute conduct; here was a peasant who had driven his wife out of the house because she had not worked all the spring; here was also that sick woman, his wife, who sat, sobbing and saying nothing, on the

grass near the entrance, and displayed her inflamed, swollen leg, carelessly wrapped in a dirty rag —

Nekhlyúdov listened to all requests and complaints, and he gave his advice to some, and settled the quarrels or made promises to others. He experienced a certain mixed feeling of weariness, shame, helplessness, and remorse, and walked to his room.

XX.

In the small room which Nekhlyúdov occupied, stood an old leather divan studded with brass nails, several chairs of the same description, an open antiquated card-table, with incrustations, indentations, and a brass rim, on which lay papers, and an antiquated, yellow, open English grand, with worn, narrow keys. Between the windows hung a large mirror in an old gilt carved frame. On the floor, near the table, lay stacks of papers, books, and accounts. The room bore altogether a disorderly aspect, and was devoid of character; and this living disorder formed a sharp contrast to the affected, old-fashioned, aristocratic arrangement of the other rooms of the large house.

Upon entering the room Nekhlyúdov angrily threw his hat upon the table, and sat down on a chair which stood in front of the grand, and crossed his legs and dropped his head.

"Well, will you have your breakfast, your Grace?" said, upon entering the room, a tall, haggard, wrinkled old woman, in cap, large kerchief, and chintz dress.

Nekhlyúdov turned around to take a look at her, and kept silent for awhile, as though considering something.

"No, I do not care to, nurse," he said, and again became pensive.

The nurse angrily shook her head at him, and sighed.

"Oh, Dmítri Nikoláevich, why do you look so sad? There are greater sorrows, and they pass, — really they do —"

"But I am not sad. What makes you think so, Mother Malánya Finogénovna?" answered Nekhlyúdov, trying to smile.

"Yes, you are. Don't I see it?" the nurse began to speak with animation. "You are day in, day out, all alone. And you take everything to heart, and attend to everything yourself. You have even quit eating. Is this right? If you only went to visit the city, or your neighbours, — but this is an unheard-of thing. You are young, so why should you worry about everything? Forgive me, sir, I will sit down," continued the nurse, seating herself near the door. "You have been so indulgent with them, that nobody is afraid of you. Is this the way masters do? There is nothing good in it. You are ruining yourself, and the people are getting spoilt. You know, our peasants do not understand what you are doing for them, really they don't. Why do you not go to see your aunty; she wrote you the truth —" the nurse admonished him.

Nekhlyúdov kept growing more and more despondent. His right hand, which was resting on his knee, fell flaccidly upon the keys. They gave forth a chord, a second, a third — Nekhlyúdov moved up, drew his other hand from his pocket, and began to play. The chords which he took were sometimes unprepared, and not always correct; they were often common enough to be trite, and did not display the least musical talent; but this occupation afforded him a certain indefinable melancholy pleasure.

At every change of harmony, he waited in breathless expectancy what would come out of it, and, when something came, his imagination dimly supplied what was lacking. It seemed to him that he heard hundreds of melodies: a chorus and an orchestra, in conformity with his harmony.

But he derived his chief pleasure from the intensified

activity of his imagination, which at that time brought up before him, disconnectedly and fragmentarily, but with wonderful clearness, the most varied, mixed, and absurd images and pictures from the past and future.

Now he saw the bloated form of Davýdka the White timidly blinking with his white eyelashes at the sight of his mother's black, venous fist; his curved back, and immense hands covered with white hair, answering to all tortures and deprivations with patience and submission to fate.

Then he saw the nimble nurse, emboldened through her association with the manor, and he imagined her visiting the villages and preaching to the peasants that they must conceal their money from the proprietors; and he unconsciously repeated to himself, "Yes, it is necessary to conceal the money from the proprietors!"

Then suddenly presented itself to him the blonde head of his future wife, for some reason in tears, and in great anguish leaning upon his shoulder.

Then he saw Churís's kindly blue eyes, tenderly looking down upon his only thick-bellied little son. Yes, he saw in him not only a son, but a helper and saviour. "This is love!" he whispered.

Then he recalled Yukhvánka's mother, and the expression of long-suffering and forgiveness which he had noticed upon her aged face, in spite of her prominent tooth and abhorrent features. "No doubt, I am the first one to have noticed this, in the seventy years of her life," he thought; and he whispered, "It is strange," and continued unconsciously to run his fingers over the keys and to listen to the sounds they made.

Then he vividly recalled his flight from the apiary, and the expression of the faces of Ignát and Karp, who evidently wanted to laugh, but pretended that they did not see him.

He blushed, and involuntarily looked at his nurse, who

remained sitting at the door, silently gazing at him, and now and then shaking her gray hair.

Suddenly there came to him the tróyka of sweaty horses, and Ilyúshka's handsome and strong figure, with his blond curls, beaming, narrow blue eyes, ruddy cheeks, and light-coloured down just beginning to cover his lip and chin. He remembered how Ilyúshka was afraid he would not be permitted to go teaming, and how warmly he defended his cause, which he liked so well. And he saw a gray, misty morning, a slippery highway, and a long row of heavily laden, mat-covered three-horse wagons, marked with big black letters. The stout-legged, well-fed horses, jingling their bells, bending their backs, and tugging at their traces, pulled evenly up-hill, straining their legs so that the sponges might catch on the slippery road. Down-hill, past the train of wagons, came dashing the stage, tinkling its little bells, which reëchoed far into the large forest that extended on both sides of the road.

"Whew!" shouted, in a childish voice, the first driver, with a tin label on his lambskin cap, raising his whip above his head.

Karp, with his red beard and gloomy look, was striding heavily in his huge boots beside the front wheel of the first wagon. From the second wagon stuck out the handsome head of Ilyúshka, who, at the early dawn, was making himself snug and warm under the front mat. Three tróykas, laden with portmanteaus, dashed by, with rumbling wheels, jingling bells, and shouts. Ilyúshka again hid his handsome head under the mat, and fell asleep.

Now it was a clear, warm evening. The plank gate creaked for the tired teams that were crowded in front of the tavern, and the tall, mat-covered wagons, jolting over the board that lay in the gate entrance, disappeared one after another under the spacious sheds.

Ilyúshka merrily greeted the fair-complexioned, broad-

chested landlady, who asked, "Do you come far? And will you have a good supper?" looking with pleasure at the handsome lad, with his sparkling, kindly eyes.

Now, having unharnessed the horses, he went into the close hut crowded with people, made the sign of the cross, sat down at a full wooden bowl, and chatted merrily with the landlady and his companions.

And then his bed was under the starry heaven, which was visible from the shed, and upon the fragrant hay, near his horses which, stamping and snorting, rummaged through the fodder in the wooden cribs. He walked up to the hay, turned to the east, and, crossing himself some thirty times in succession, over his broad, powerful breast, and shaking his bright curls, he said the Lord's Prayer, and repeated some twenty times the "Kyrie eleison," and, wrapping his cloak around body and head, slept the sound, careless sleep of a strong, healthy man.

And he saw in his dream the city of Kíev, with its saints and throngs of pilgrims; Rómen, with its merchants and merchandise; and Odessa and the endless blue sea with its white sails; and the city of Constantinople, with its golden houses, and white-breasted, black-browed Turkish maidens; and he flew there, rising on some invisible pinions. He flew freely and easily, farther and farther, and saw below him golden cities bathed in bright splendour, and the blue heaven with its pure stars, and the blue sea with its white sails, and he felt a joy and pleasure in flying ever farther and farther —

"Glorious!" Nekhlyúdov whispered to himself, and the thought came to him, "Why am I not Ilyúshka?"

THE COSSACKS

A Novel of the Caucasus

1852

THE COSSACKS

A Novel of the Caucasus

I.

EVERYTHING was quiet in Moscow. In a few isolated places could be heard the squeak of wheels over the wintry street. There were no lights in the windows, and the lamps were extinguished. From the churches rang out the sounds of bells which, billowing over the sleepy city, reminded one of morning.

The streets were empty. Here and there a night cabman caused the sand and snow to become mixed under the narrow runners of his sleigh, and, betaking himself to the opposite corner, fell asleep, waiting for a passenger. An old woman walked by, on her way to church, where, reflected from the gold foils of the holy images, burnt with a red light a few unsymmetrically placed wax tapers. Working people were rising after the long winter night, and walking to work.

But for gentlemen it was still evening.

In one of the windows of Chevalier's establishment there peeped, contrary to law, a light through the closed shutter. At the entrance stood a carriage, a sleigh, and cabs, closely pressed together, with their backs to the curbstone. Here was also a stage tróyka. The janitor,

wrapped in his furs and crouching, seemed to be hiding around the corner of the house.

"What makes them keep up this unending prattle?" thought the lackey with the haggard face, who was sitting in the antechamber. "And that, too, when I am keeping watch!"

In the adjoining, brightly illuminated room could be heard the voices of three young men, who were dining. They were sitting at a table, upon which stood the remnants of a supper and wine. One of them, a small, clean-looking, haggard, and homely fellow was seated and looking with kindly, though wearied, eyes at him who was to depart. Another, a tall man, was reclining near the table, that was covered with empty bottles, and playing with his watch-key. A third, in a new short fur coat, paced the room, now and then stopped to crack an almond between his fairly fat and powerful fingers, with their manicured nails, and smiled for some reason or other. His eyes and face were flushed. He spoke with ardour and in gestures; but it was evident that he could not find words, and that all the words which occurred to him appeared insufficient to express everything that was upon his heart. He was continually smiling.

"Now I may say everything!" said the departing man. "I do not mean to justify myself, but I should like to have you understand me as I understand myself, and not as the malicious regard this affair. You say that I am guilty toward her," he turned to the one who looked upon him with kindly eyes.

"Yes, guilty," answered the short, homely fellow, and there seemed to be even more kindness and weariness expressed in his glance.

"I know why you say so," answered the departing man. "To be loved is, in your opinion, just such happiness as to love, and it is sufficient for a whole life, if you once obtain it."

"Yes, quite sufficient, my dear! More than enough," confirmed the short, homely fellow, opening and closing his eyes.

"But why should one not love?" said the departing man, falling into a reverie, and looking at his companion, as though with compassion. "Why not love? Don't feel like loving — No, to be loved is a misfortune when you feel that you are guilty because you are not returning the love, nor ever can return it. O Lord!" and he waved his hand. "If all this had happened in a sensible way! But no, it is all topsyturvy, not according to our ways, but in its own peculiar manner. I feel as though I had stolen that sentiment. And you think the same way; do not deny it, you certainly must think that way. And would you believe it? Of all the mean and stupid acts that I have managed to commit in my life, this is the only one for which I do not feel, nor ever can feel, remorse. Neither in the beginning, nor later, have I lied to myself, nor to her. I imagined that at last I had fallen in love with her; and then I saw that it was an involuntary lie, that it was impossible thus to love, and I was unable to go any farther; but she did go farther. Am I to be blamed because I could not? What could I do?"

"Well, now it is all ended!" said his friend, lighting a cigar in order to dispel sleep. "There is this much: you have not loved yet, and you do not know what love is."

The one who wore the short fur coat was on the point of saying something, and he grasped his head with both his hands. But he did not express what he intended to say.

"I have not loved! Yes, it is true, I have not loved. I certainly desire to love, and there is nothing stronger than my desire! And then again, is there such a love? There always remains something unfinished. Well, what

is the use of speaking? I have blundered and blundered in my life. But now all is ended, you are right. And I feel that a new life is to begin."

"In which you will blunder again," said the one who was lying on the sofa and playing with his watch-key; but the departing man did not hear him.

"I am both sad and happy to leave," he continued. "Why sad? I do not know."

And the departing man began to speak of himself, without noticing that the others were not as much interested in this as he. Man is never such an egotist as in the moment of sentimental transport. It seems to him then that there is nothing in the world more beautiful and interesting than he himself.

"Dmítri Andréevich, the driver refuses to wait!" said, upon entering, a young manorial servant, in a fur coat, and wrapped in a scarf. "The horses have been standing since twelve o'clock, and now it is four."

Dmítri Andréevich looked at his Vanyúsha. In his scarf, felt boots, and sleepy face he heard the voice of another life which called him, — a life of labour, privation, and activity.

"That is so, good-bye!" he said, searching for the unhooked eye of his fur coat.

In spite of the advice of his friends to give the driver a *pourboire*, he donned his cap, and stood in the middle of the room. They kissed once, twice, then stopped, and kissed for the third time. The one who was in the short fur coat walked up to the table, emptied a beaker that was standing upon it, took the hand of the short, homely fellow, and blushed.

"No, I will say it — I ought to be and can be frank with you, because I love you — You love her? I always thought so — yes?"

"Yes," answered his friend, smiling more gently still.

"And maybe —"

"Please, I have been ordered to put out the lights," said the sleepy lackey who had heard the last conversation, and was ruminating why it was gentlemen eternally talked of one and the same thing. "Against whom shall the bill be charged? Against you?" he added, turning to the tall gentleman, knowing in advance who it would be.

"Against me," said the tall man. "How much is it?"

"Twenty-six roubles."

The tall man mused for awhile, but said nothing, and placed the bill in his pocket.

The other two continued their conversation.

"Good-bye, you are a fine fellow!" said the short, homely man with the gentle eyes.

Tears stood in the eyes of both. They walked out to the entrance.

"Oh, yes!" said the departing man, blushing, and turning to the tall gentleman. "You will fix the bill with Chevalier, and then write to me about it."

"All right, all right," said the tall gentleman, putting on his gloves. "How I envy you!" he added, quite unexpectedly, as they walked out to the entrance.

The departing man seated himself in his sleigh, wrapped himself in his fur coat, and said, "Well, we will start," and moved in his seat to give a place to him who had said that he envied him; his voice was trembling.

The friend who saw him off said, "Good-bye, Mítya, may God grant you —" He did not wish anything but that he should leave as soon as possible, and so he could not finish what it was he wished him.

They were silent. Again somebody said, "Good-bye!"

Somebody said, "Go!" and the driver started his horses.

"Elizár, the carriage!" shouted one of these who had seen him off.

The cabmen and the coachman stirred, called to their

horses, and pulled the reins. The frozen sleigh squeaked over the snow.

"This Olénin is a fine fellow," said one of the two. "But what pleasure is there in going to the Caucasus, and as a yunker[1] at that? I would not do it for anything. Will you dine at the club to-morrow?"

"Yes."

And the friends parted.

The departing man felt warm, even hot, in his fur coat. He sat down in the bed of the sleigh and stretched himself; and the shaggy stage-horses flew from one dark street into another, past houses he had never seen. It appeared to Olénin that only those who departed travelled through these streets. Around him it was dark, speechless, gloomy, and his soul was full of recollections, love, regrets, and of pleasurable tears that choked him.

[1] A non-commissioned officer of the nobility.

II.

"I LOVE! I love them very much! They are fine! It is good!" he repeated, and he wanted to weep. But he was not quite sure why he wanted to weep, who were fine, and whom he loved.

He now gazed at some house, and wondered why it was built in such a strange manner; and again he wondered why the driver and Vanyúsha, who were such strangers to him, were so close to him and jolted and shook simultaneously with him from the sudden jerks of the side horses who tugged at the frozen traces, and he repeated, "They are fine, I love them," and once he even said, "There she goes! Superb!" and he wondered why he said that, and asked himself, "Am I drunk?"

It is true nearly two bottles of wine had fallen to his share, but it was not the wine alone that had produced that effect upon Olénin. He thought of what appeared to him to be the intimate words of friendship which had timidly, as though accidentally, been told him at his departure. He thought of the pressure of the hands, of the glances, the silence, and the voice of him who said "Good-bye, Mítya!" when he was seated in the sleigh. He thought of his own determined frankness. And all this touched him.

Before his departure, not only his friends and his relatives, not only indifferent people, but even those who were unsympathetic, or ill-wishing — all seemed to have been in league to love him better, and to forgive him, as before confession or death.

"Maybe I shall not return from the Caucasus," he thought. And he thought that he loved his friends, and somebody else. And he was sorry for himself. But it was not the love for his friends that touched him and elevated his soul, so that he was unable to restrain those meaningless words that issued unbidden from his mouth, — nor was it the love for a woman (he had never loved) that had brought him to this state. It was the love of self, the ardent, hopeful, young love of everything good in his soul (it seemed to him that it was filled with nothing but that which was good), that caused him to weep and mutter incoherent words.

Olénin was a young man who had never finished his university course; who had never served (he was merely a supernumerary in some government office); who had spent half his fortune; and who until his twenty-fourth year had chosen no career for himself, and had never done anything. He was what is called a "young man" in Moscow society.

At eighteen years of age Olénin had been as free as only were rich young Russians of the forties who at an early age were left as orphans. He knew neither physical nor moral fetters; he could do everything, and he wanted nothing, and nothing bound him. He had neither family, nor country, nor faith, nor want. He believed in nothing, and acknowledged nothing. Yet, though he acknowledged nothing, he was not a gloomy, *blasé*, and meditative youth, but, on the contrary, was easily carried away.

He had decided that there was no love, and yet the presence of a young and beautiful woman made him breathless with delight. He had long known that honours and distinction were nonsense, but he experienced an involuntary pleasure when Prince Sérgi walked up to him at a ball, and addressed him graciously.

He allowed himself to be carried away by his raptures

only so long as they did not bind him. The moment he devoted himself to one subject, and felt the approach of labour and struggles, — the petty struggles with life, — he instinctively hastened to tear himself away from his sentiment or from affairs, and to regain his liberty. Thus he had begun his worldly life, his service, farming, music, to which he thought at one time of devoting himself, and even love of women, in which he did not believe.

He pondered how to expend all that strength of youth, which comes to man only once in a lifetime, — whether on art, on science, on love for a woman, or on practical life; he wished to employ not the power of his mind, heart, and education, but that unrepeated impulse, that power, granted to man but once, to make of himself everything he wishes, and, as he thinks, everything of the world he may wish.

It is true there are people who lack this impulse, and who, upon entering life, put on the first yoke they find, and continue to work honestly in it until the end of their days. But Olénin was too vividly conscious of the presence of that all-powerful god of youth, of that ability to transform himself into one desire and one thought, of the ability to wish and do, to throw himself headlong into a bottomless abyss, not knowing why, or wherefore. He carried this consciousness with him, was proud of it, and, without knowing it, was happy in its possession.

So far he had loved himself only, nor could he help loving himself, because he expected nothing but good things of himself, and had not yet been disappointed in himself. At his departure from Moscow he was in that happy, youthful frame of mind when a young man, having become conscious of his previous mistakes, suddenly says to himself that the past was wrong, that everything that preceded was accidental and insignificant, that he had not heretofore tried to live decently, but that now, with his departure from Moscow, a new life would

begin, in which there would be none of those blunders, and no remorse, and in which he certainly would be happy.

When one sets out for a long journey, the imagination at the first two stages remains in the place whence one has set out; then, suddenly, on the first morning which one passes on the road, one is transferred to the goal of the journey, and there builds castles of the future. The same happened to Olénin.

As he drove out of the city, and gazed at the snow-covered fields, he rejoiced at being all alone in their midst, wrapped himself in his fur coat, let himself down in the bed of the sleigh, became calm, and dozed off. His leave-taking with his friends unstrung him, and he recalled his whole last winter which he had passed in Moscow; and pictures of that past, interrupted by indistinct thoughts and reproaches, began to rise unbidden before his imagination.

He recalled the friend who had seen him off, and his relations with the maiden of whom they had been speaking. That girl was rich. "How could he have loved her, when he knew that she was in love with me?" he thought, and evil suspicions rose in his mind. "When you come to think of it, there is much dishonesty in people. But why have I not yet loved?" the question occurred to him. "Everybody tells me that I have not yet loved. Am I really a moral monster?"

And he began to recall the subjects of his temporary transports. He recalled the first experience of his worldly life, and the sister of one of his friends, with whom he used to pass evenings at the table with a lamp upon it that cast a light upon her slender fingers at work, and upon the lower part of her fair oval face, and he remembered those conversations that dragged along like a child's game called "the fox is alive," and the general awkwardness, and the embarrassment, and the continuous

feeling of provocation at this strained relation. A voice told him, "It is not that, not that," and it really turned out that way.

Then he recalled the ball and the mazurka with beautiful D——. "How I was in love that night, and how happy I was! And how pained and mortified I was when I awoke the next morning, and felt that I was free! Why does not love come? and bind my hands and feet?" he thought. "No, there is no love! My neighbour, who told me, and Dubróvin, and the marshal of nobility, that she loved the stars, was not that either."

And he thought of his farming activity in the country, and found no pleasant incident upon which to rest his memory. "Will they think for a long time of my departure?" it suddenly occurred to him. But whom did he mean by "they"? He did not know, and immediately a thought came to him that made him frown and utter indistinct sounds: it was the recollection of M. Capelle and the 678 roubles which he owed his tailor; and he recalled the words with which he begged the tailor to wait another year, and the expression of amazement and of submission to fate which appeared on the tailor's countenance.

"O Lord, Lord!" he repeated, blinking, and trying to dispel the unbearable thought. "And yet, she loved me, in spite of it," he thought of the maiden of whom they had been speaking at the leave-taking. "If I married her, I should have no debts, but now I still owe Vasílev."

And he recalled the last evening which he had passed at the gaming-table with Vasílev in the club, whither he had driven straight from her house; and he recalled his humiliating requests to continue playing, and Vasílev's cold refusals. "One year of strict economy, and all that will be paid, and the devil take them—" But in spite of his self-assurance, he again started to count up his

debts, and to consider when they would fall due, or when he should be able to pay them.

"Why, I owe Morelle, also, in addition to Chevalier," he suddenly thought, and the whole night in which he had run up such a bill stood before him. It was a carousal with the gipsies, which was given by some visitors from St. Petersburg, Sáshka B——, aid-de-camp, and Prince D——, and that distinguished old gentleman. "What makes those gentlemen so satisfied with themselves?" he thought. "And on what ground do they form a separate circle to which others ought to feel themselves flattered to be admitted? Because they are aids-de-camp? It is really terrible what stupid and mean people they consider others to be! However, I showed them that I did not have the least desire to get better acquainted with them. Still, I think, Manager Andréy would be very much puzzled if he heard me saying 'thou' to such a gentleman as Sáshka B——, colonel and aid-de-camp — And nobody drank as much as I on that evening; I taught the gipsies a new song, and everybody listened. Though I have done many a foolish thing, I am a nice, a very nice young man," he thought.

The morning found Olénin at the third stage. He drank tea, transferred with Vanyúsha's aid the bundles and portmanteaus, and sat down gravely, precisely, and accurately among them, knowing where each thing was, — where the money was and how much of it; where the passport, and the stage permit, and the highway receipt were, — and all that seemed to him so practically arranged that he was happy, and the distant journey presented itself to him as a protracted outing.

During the morning and midday he was lost in arithmetical calculations: how many versts he had behind him; how many were left to the next station; how many to the nearest town; to dinner, to tea, to Stavrópol; and what part of the whole road he had behind him. At the

same time he calculated how much money he had; how much there would be left; how much he needed to acquit himself of all his debts; and what part of his whole income he would spend in a month. In the evening, after having had his tea, he figured out that to Stavrópol seven-elevenths of the whole road were left; his debts amounted to but seven months of strict economy, and to one-eighth of his fortune; and having calmed himself, he wrapped himself up, let himself down in the bed of the sleigh, and again fell asleep.

His imagination now was in the future, in the Caucasus. All his dreams of the future were connected with pictures of Amalát-bek,[1] Circassian maidens, mountains, avalanches, terrible torrents, and perils. All that presented itself in a dim and indistinct shape; but enticing glory and threatening death formed the chief interest of that future.

Now, with extraordinary valour and surprising strength, he killed and vanquished an endless number of mountaineers; now he was himself a mountaineer, and together with them defended his independence against the Russians. The moment he thought out the details, he found the old Moscow faces taking part in them. Sáshka B—— fought with the Russians, or mountaineers, against him. He knew not how, but even M. Capelle, the tailor, took part in the victor's triumph.

If he recalled his old humiliations, foibles, and mistakes in connection with this, that reminiscence gave him only pleasure. It was clear that there, amidst the mountains, torrents, Circassian maidens, and perils, these mistakes could not be repeated. Having once made that confession to himself, there was an end to them.

There was one, the most precious dream, which mingled in every thought of the young man about the future. This dream was woman. There, among the mountains,

[1] Character in a novel by Bestúzhev-Marlínski.

she presented herself to his imagination in the shape of a Circassian slave, with a slender figure, long braid, and submissive, deep eyes. He saw in the mountains a lonely cabin, and *her* on the threshold, waiting for him while he returned to her tired, covered with dust, blood, and glory; and he dreamed of her kisses, her shoulders, her sweet voice, her submissiveness. She was charming, but uneducated, wild, coarse.

In the long winter evenings he would begin to educate her. She was intelligent, quick-witted, gifted, and rapidly acquired all the necessary information. Why not? She might easily learn the languages, read the productions of French literature, and understand them. "Notre Dame de Paris," for example, would no doubt please her. She might even speak French. In the drawing-room she might possess more native dignity than a lady of the highest circles of society. She could sing, simply, powerfully, and passionately.

"Oh, what bosh!" he said to himself.

Just then they arrived at some station, and it was necessary to climb from one sleigh into another, and to give a *pourboire*. But he again searched with his imagination for the nonsense which he had left off, and again there stood before him Circassian maidens, glory, return to Russia, an aid-de-campship, a charming wife. "But there is no love!" he said to himself. "Honours are nonsense. And the six hundred and seventy-eight roubles? And the conquered territory which would give me more wealth than I should need for all my life? Indeed, it will not be well to make use of all that wealth by myself. I shall have to distribute it. But to whom? Six hundred and seventy-eight roubles to Capelle, and then we will see —"

And dim visions shrouded his thoughts, and only Vanyúsha's voice and a feeling of interrupted motion disturbed his sound, youthful sleep, and, without being

conscious of it, he crawled into another sleigh at the following station, and travelled on.

The next morning was the same, — the same stations, the same tea-drinking, the same cruppers of the horses in motion, the same short chats with Vanyúsha, the same indistinct dreams and the drowsiness in the evening, and the tired, sound, youthful sleep during the night.

III.

The farther Olénin travelled from the centre of Russia, the more distant his memories seemed to him; and the nearer he approached the Caucasus, the happier he felt. "To go away for ever, and never to come back, and not to appear in society," it sometimes occurred to him. "The people that I see here are no people; no one knows me here, and not one of them can ever be in Moscow and in the society in which I moved, or find out anything about my past. And not one of that society will ever know what I was doing when I lived among those people."

And an entirely new feeling of freedom from his whole past seized him among the vulgar beings whom he met on the road, and whom he did not regard as people on the same level with his Moscow acquaintances. The coarser the people were, and the fewer the signs of civilization, the freer he felt himself.

Stavrópol, through which he passed, mortified him. The shop-signs, — nay, French signs, — the ladies in a carriage, the cabmen who stood in the square, the boulevard, and a gentleman in an overcoat and hat, who was strolling in the boulevard and glancing at the stranger, affected him painfully. "Maybe these people know some of my acquaintances," and he again recalled the club, the tailor, the cards, and society —

After Stavrópol, however, everything went satisfactorily: it was all wild and, besides, beautiful and warlike. And Olénin grew happier and happier. All the Cossacks,

drivers, and inspectors seemed to him to be simple creatures with whom he could make simple jokes, and chat, without stopping to consider to what class of society they belonged. They all belonged to the human race, which was unconsciously dear to Olénin, and they all were friendly to him.

As far back as the Land of the Don Army his sleigh had been exchanged for a cart, and beyond Stavrópol it grew so warm that Olénin travelled without a fur coat. It was spring, an unexpected, joyous spring for Olénin.

At night they could not leave the villages, and they said that in the evening it was dangerous to travel; Vanyúsha shuddered, and a loaded gun lay in the stage vehicle. Olénin felt happier still. At one station, the inspector told of a terrible murder that had lately happened on the road. They now and then met armed men.

"That is where it begins!" Olénin said to himself, and waited for the sight of the snow-capped mountains, about which he had been told so much. Once, toward evening, a Nogáy driver pointed with his whip at the mountains beyond the clouds. Olénin eagerly looked at them, but it was misty, and the clouds half-concealed the mountains. Olénin saw something gray, white, and fleecy, and, however much he tried, he could not find anything attractive in the view of the mountains, of which he had read and heard so much. He concluded that the mountains and the clouds looked precisely alike, and that the special beauty of the snow-capped mountains, of which he had been told so much, was just such a fiction as Bach's music, and the love for a woman, in neither of which he believed, and he ceased waiting for the mountains.

But on the following day, early in the morning, he was awakened by the dampness in his vehicle, and he indifferently turned his eyes to the right. It was a very clear morning. Suddenly he saw, some twenty

steps from him, as he thought at first, pure white masses, with their delicate contours and the fantastic and sharply defined outline of their summits, against the distant sky. And when he became aware of the great distance between him and the mountains and the sky, and of the immensity of the mountains, and when he felt the immeasurableness of that beauty, he was frightened, thinking that it was a vision, a dream. He shook himself, in order to be rid of his sleep. The mountains remained the same.

"What is this? What is it?" he asked the driver.

"The mountains," the Nogáy answered, with indifference.

"I myself have been looking at them for a long time," said Vanyúsha. "It is beautiful! They will not believe it at home!"

In the rapid motion of the vehicle over the even road, the mountains seemed to be running along the horizon, gleaming in the rising sun with their rosy summits. At first the mountains only surprised Olénin, but later they gave him pleasure. And later, as he gazed longer at this chain of snow-capped mountains, which were not connected with other black mountains, but rose directly from the steppe, he began by degrees to understand their full beauty, and to "feel" the mountains.

From that moment, everything he saw, everything he thought, everything he felt, assumed for him a new, severely majestic character, that of the mountains. All the Moscow reminiscences, his shame and remorse, all the trite dreams of the Caucasus, everything disappeared, and never returned again. "Now it has begun," a solemn voice said to him. And the road, and the distant line of the Térek, and the villages, and the people, all that appeared to him no longer a trifling matter.

He looked at the sky, and he thought of the mountains. He looked at himself, and at Vanyúsha, — and again the mountains. There, two Cossacks rode by, and

their muskets in cases evenly vibrated on their backs, and their horses intermingled their chestnut and gray legs, — and the mountains. Beyond the Térek was seen the smoke in a native village, — and the mountains.

The sun rose and glistened on the Térek beyond the reeds, — and the mountains. From the Cossack village came a native cart, and women, beautiful young women, walked, — and the mountains. "Abréks[1] race through the steppes, and I am travelling, and fear them not: I have a gun, and strength, and youth," — and the mountains.

[1] Mountaineer braves.

IV.

The whole part of the Térek line, along which the Grebén Cossack villages are located, is about eighty versts long, and bears a uniform character, both as to topography and population. The Térek, which divides the Cossacks from the mountaineers, flows turbidly and rapidly, but now broadly and calmly, continually depositing the grayish sand on the low, reed-covered right bank, and washing away the steep, but not high, left shore with its roots of century oaks, rotting plane-trees, and young underbrush.

On the right bank are situated peaceful, but still restless, native villages; on the left bank lie the Cossack villages, at half a verst from the river, and at the distance of from seven to eight versts from each other. In former days the greater number of these villages were on the very shore; but the Térek deflected every year more and more to the north of the mountains, and undermined them, so that now only weed-grown old town locations, gardens, pear-trees, plum-trees and poplars, intertwined with blackberry-bushes and wild-growing grape-vines, may be seen in those places. Nobody lives there, and in the sand may be noticed the tracks of deer, boars, hares, and pheasants, who have taken a liking to these spots.

From Cossack village to village runs a road as straight as an arrow, cut through the woods. Along the road are placed cordons in which Cossacks are located; between the cordons sentinels are stationed in watch-towers. Only

a narrow strip of fertile woodland, about two thousand feet in width, forms the possession of the Cossacks.

To the north of them begin the sand-dunes of the Nogáy or Mozdók steppe, which extends far to the north and connects, God knows where, with the Trukhmén, the Astrakhán, and the Kirgíz-Kaysák steppes. To the south, beyond the Térek, are the Great Chechnyá, the Kochkalósov chain, the Black Mountains, another range, and finally the snow-capped mountains, which are just visible, but which have never been traversed by any one. In this fertile, wooded strip, rich in vegetation, has lived since time immemorial a warlike, handsome, and rich Russian population of dissenters, called the Grebén Cossacks.

Long, long ago, their ancestors, the dissenters, had run away from Russia and settled beyond the Térek, between the Chechéns on the Grebén, — the first range of wooded mountains of the Great Chechnyá. Living among the Chechéns, the Cossacks have intermarried with them, and have adopted the customs, manner of life, and habits of the mountaineers; but they have retained, in all their former purity, the Russian language and ancient faith.

There is still living a tradition among these Cossacks which tells that the Tsar Iván the Terrible came to the Térek, called the old men from the Grebén into his presence, gave them land on this side of the river, advised them to live in peace, and promised them not to disturb their independence, nor to compel them to change their faith.

Even now the Cossack families count their relationship with the Chechéns, and their love of freedom, indolence, pillage, and war form the chief features of their character. The influence of Russia finds its expression from its disadvantageous side in the elections, the removal of bells, and in the army which is stationed there or passes through.

A Cossack, by his natural inclination, hates less a warrior brave who has killed his brother, than a soldier who is stationed there to defend his village, but who has smoked up his cabin with tobacco. He respects the hostile mountaineer, but despises the soldier, who is a stranger to him, and an oppressor. A Russian peasant proper is to the Cossack a strange, wild, and contemptible creature, not different from the Little-Russian peddlers and immigrants whom he has seen, and whom he contemptuously designates as "fullers."

His dandyism consists in imitating the Chechén attire. He gets his best ammunition from the mountaineers, and his best horses are bought and stolen from them. A young Cossack brags of his knowledge of the Tartar language, and when he is carousing speaks in Tartar even to his brother Cossack. In spite of this, these Christian people, lost in a corner of the earth, and surrounded by semi-savage Mohammedan tribes and by soldiers, regard themselves as highly civilized, and consider none but Cossacks to be men; upon everybody else they look with contempt.

A Cossack passes the greater part of his life in the cordons, in expeditions, hunting, or fishing. He hardly ever works at home. His presence in the village is an exception, and then he carouses. The Cossacks all have wine of their own, and intoxication is not so much a common weakness of theirs, as a ceremony, the neglect of which would be considered an apostasy.

Upon woman a Cossack looks as an implement of his well-being. A maiden is permitted to take things easy; but a wife is compelled to work for him from youth to advanced old age; he looks upon woman with the Eastern conception of submissiveness and labour. In consequence of this view, a woman, whose physical and moral development is intensified, outwardly submits, but at the same time has, as generally in the East, an incom-

parably greater influence and weight in her domestic life than women have in the West. Her removal from public life, and her habit of doing man's heavy work, give her greater weight and power in her domestic life.

A Cossack, who considers it indecent to speak kindly or leisurely with his wife in the presence of strangers, involuntarily feels her superiority when he is left with her without witnesses. The whole house, all the property, all the farm, is acquired by her, and is maintained by her labour and care. Although he is firmly convinced that work is disgraceful for a Cossack, and becoming only to a Nogáy labourer and to a woman, he feels vaguely that everything he uses and calls his own is the result of this labour, and that it lies in the power of woman, of his mother and his wife, whom he regards as his slave, to deprive him of everything which he uses.

Besides this, the continuous heavy man's labour, and the cares that are put into her hands, have given the Grebén woman an unusually independent and manly character, and have developed to an astonishing degree her physical strength, sound common sense, determination, and firmness of character. The women are generally more intelligent, more developed and beautiful than the men. The beauty of a Grebén woman is particularly striking by its combination of the purest type of the Caucasian face with the broad and powerful build of the northern woman.

The Cossack women wear the Caucasian garb: the Tartar shirt, half-coat, and foot-gear; but they wrap their heads with a kerchief in the Russian fashion. The foppishness, cleanliness, and elegance of their attire, and the arrangement of their cabins, constitute a habit and necessity of their lives. In regard to men, the women, and especially the maidens, enjoy absolute freedom.

The village of Novomlín has been considered to be the root of the Grebén Cossacks. Here, more than elsewhere,

the customs of the old Grebéns have been preserved, and the women of this village have ever been famous for their beauty in the whole Caucasus. The Cossacks gain a subsistence from their vineyards and fruit-gardens, from their fields of melons and pumpkins, from fishing and hunting, from their fields of maize and millet, and from rapine.

The village of Novomlín is three versts distant from the Térek, from which it is separated by a dense forest. On one side of the road, which runs through the village, is the river; on the other are the green vineyards and gardens, and may be seen the sand-dunes of the Nogáy steppe. The village is surrounded by an earthen rampart and prickly hedge. One enters into and issues from the village through a tall gate, swinging on posts, with a small, reed-thatched roof, near which is placed, on a wooden gun-carriage, a monstrous cannon which has not been fired for a hundred years, and which had been at one time taken from the enemy by the Cossacks. A Cossack in uniform, sabre, and with his gun, sometimes stands sentinel at the gate, and just as often he is not there; sometimes he presents arms to a passing officer, and sometimes not.

Under the roof of the gate there is a white board with the following inscription in black letters: "Houses, 266; male souls, 897; female souls, 1,012." The houses of the Cossacks are all raised on posts, three feet or more from the ground, are neatly thatched with reeds, and have a ridge-piece. Though they are not all new, they are straight, with high porches of various shapes, and are not attached one to another, but are freely and picturesquely scattered along broad streets and lanes. In front of the bright, large windows of many cabins, tower above them dark green poplars, tender, pale-foliaged acacias with white fragrant flowers, boldly shining sunflowers, and twining pinks and grape-vines.

On the broad square are to be seen three little shops where may be found dry goods, pumpkin seeds, St. John's

bread, and cake; and behind a high enclosure, back of a row of old poplars, is visible, longer and taller than the rest, the house of the commander of the regiment, with double-winged windows. During week-days, particularly in the summer, but few people may be seen in the streets of the village. The Cossacks are on service, in the cordons and expeditions; the old men are out hunting, fishing, or helping the women in the gardens and orchards. Only the very old and young remain at home.

V.

It was one of those peculiar evenings which one finds only in the Caucasus. The sun had set behind the mountains, but it was still light. The evening glow embraced one-third of the heaven, and the dull white masses of the mountains stood out sharply in the light of the setting sun. The air was rarefied, immovable, and replete with echoes. A shadow, several versts in length, fell from the mountains upon the steppe. In the steppe, beyond the river, along the roads, everything was quiet.

Now and then appeared a few men on horseback: those were Cossacks from the cordon, or Chechéns from their village, who looked with surprise and curiosity at the passengers in the vehicle, and tried to make out who those bad people could be. As the evening, so the people, in dread of each other, clung to the habitations, and only beasts and birds, not fearing man, freely roamed over this wilderness. From the gardens hastened, with merry chatter, before sundown, the Cossack women who had been tying up the wicker fences. And the gardens grew as deserted as the surroundings; but the village became particularly animated.

On all sides the people moved on foot, on horseback, and in squeaky wooden carts to the village. The girls, with shirts tucked up, and with stick in hand, were running, prattling merrily, to the gate, to meet the cattle that were crowding together in a cloud of dust and gnats which they had brought with them from the steppe. The well-fed cows and buffaloes scattered along the streets,

and the Cossack women, in their coloured half-coats, were mingling with them. One could hear their shrill chatter, their merry laugh, and their screams, interrupted by the lowing of the cattle.

Here, a Cossack, in accoutrements and on horseback, who had received his leave from the cordon, rode up to a cabin and, bending down, tapped at the window; and, in reply to the tap, appeared the beautiful head of a young Cossack woman, and one might hear tender words of affection. There, a broad-cheeked, tattered Nogáy labourer, having arrived with reeds from the steppe, turned the squeaking cart into the captain's clean, broad yard, threw down the yoke from the oxen, who shook their heads, and passed a few Tartar words with the master.

Near the puddle, which occupied nearly the whole street, and where people had been walking so many years, a barefooted Cossack woman, clinging close to the fences, made her way with a bundle of firewood on her back, raising her shirt high above her white feet. A Cossack, returning from the hunt, cried out to her, "Lift it higher, shameless one," and aimed his gun at her. The Cossack woman let her shirt fall, and dropped her wood.

An old Cossack, with rolled-up trousers, and gray bosom exposed, returning from his sport, carried on his shoulder a basket with quivering silvery trout; to make a short cut, he climbed across his neighbour's broken fence, and pulled off his coat, which was caught upon it. There, a woman was dragging a dry bough, and the strokes of an axe could be heard around the corner. Young Cossack children screamed, spinning their tops wherever they could find an even spot. Women climbed over fences, to save walking around corners. From all the chimneys rose the smoke from dung-chips. In every yard could be heard an increased bustle, preceding the quiet of the night.

Mother Ulítka, the wife of the ensign and schoolmaster, went, like the rest, to the gate of her house, waiting for

the cattle which her daughter Maryánka was driving in the street. She had barely opened the gate, when a large buffalo-cow, pursued by gnats, rushed bellowing into the yard; after her slowly came the well-fed cows, recognizing their mistress with their large eyes, and evenly switching their sides with their tails.

Stately and beautiful Maryánka walked through the gate and, throwing down the stick, fastened the gate, and ran nimbly to scatter the cattle, and drive them to their stalls.

"Take off your shoes, devil's daughter," cried her mother. "You have muddied your shoes."

Maryánka was not in the least insulted by being called a devil's daughter, but accepted these words as an expression of affection, and continued at her work. Maryánka's face was covered with a kerchief; she wore a rose-coloured shirt and a green half-coat. She disappeared under the penthouse, behind the large, fat cattle, and from the stall was heard her voice, gently admonishing the buffalo-cow, "Why don't you stand? Come now! Oh, there, motherkin! —"

After awhile the girl and her mother came out of the stable, and walked to the dairy, carrying two large pots of milk, — the day's milking. From the clay chimney of the dairy soon rose dung smoke, and the milk was changed into boiled cream. The girl attended to the fire, and the old woman came out to the gate.

Darkness fell over the whole village. In the air was borne the odour of vegetables, of the cattle, and of the fragrant dung smoke. At the gates and in the streets ran Cossack women, carrying burning rags in their hands. In the yards could be heard the gasping and quiet chewing of the cattle stretching themselves, and the voices of women and children calling in the courtyards and streets. On week-days a man's drunken voice is but rarely heard.

An old, tall, masculine Cossack woman, from the house

opposite, walked up to Mother Ulítka to ask her for fire; she held a rag in her hand.

"Well, mother, are you all done?" she said to her.

"The girl is making a fire in the stove. Do you need some light?" said Mother Ulítka, proud of being able to do her a favour.

The two women went into the cabin. The coarse hands, unaccustomed to small objects, trembled as she tore off the lid from the precious box of matches which are a rarity in the Caucasus. The masculine-looking visitor sat down on the threshold, with the evident intention of chatting.

"Well, motherkin, is your husband in the school?" the visitor asked.

"He is all the time teaching the children, mother. He wrote he would be back for the holidays," said the ensign's wife.

"He is a clever man; and cleverness pays."

"Of course, it does."

"But my Lukáshka is in the cordon, and he can't get any leave to come home," said the visitor, although the ensign's wife knew all that. She could not refrain from mentioning her Lukáshka, whom she had but lately allowed to become a Cossack, and whom she was desirous of marrying off to Maryánka, the ensign's daughter.

"So he is in the cordon?"

"Yes, mother. He has not been here since the holidays. A few days ago I sent him some shirts by Fomúshkin. He says everything is well, and the authorities are satisfied with him. They are looking for abréks, says he. Lukáshka, he says, is happy, and everything is all right."

"The Lord be thanked," said the ensign's wife. "In one word he is a 'saver.'"

Lukáshka was called the "Saver" for the bravery which he had displayed in "saving" a boy from drown-

ing. The ensign's wife mentioned this name, in order to say something agreeable to Lukáshka's mother.

"I thank God, mother, he is a good son. He is a fine lad, everybody speaks well of him," said Lukáshka's mother, "only I should like to see him married, and then I could die in peace."

"Well, are there not enough girls in the village?" replied the sly ensign's wife, carefully putting the lid on the match-box with her crooked fingers.

"Plenty, mother, plenty," remarked Lukáshka's mother, shaking her head, "but your girl, Maryánka, your girl, I say, is one the like of whom you will not find in the Cossack settlements."

The ensign's wife knew the intention of Lukáshka's mother; but, although Lukáshka seemed to her to be a good Cossack, she wanted to ward off the subject, — in the first place because she was the ensign's wife, and a rich woman, while Lukáshka was the son of a Cossack of the rank and file, and poor; in the second place, because she did not wish to lose her daughter so soon; but chiefly, because propriety demanded it.

"Well, when Maryánka grows up she will be a nice girl," she said, discreetly and modestly.

"I will send the go-betweens, I will. Just let us get the gardens in shape, and then we will come to ask your favour," said Lukáshka's mother. "We will come to ask Ilyá Vasílevich's favour."

"What has Ilyá to do with it?" the ensign's wife said, proudly. "I am the person to be asked. There is a time for everything."

Lukáshka's mother saw by the stern face of the ensign's wife that it was improper to continue the subject. She lighted the rag with a match and, rising, said: "Do not forget, mother, but remember these words. I must go and start a fire," she added.

As she crossed the street and waved the lighted rag in

her outstretched hand, she met Maryánka, who bowed to her.

"She is a queen of a girl, and a fine worker," she thought, as she looked at the fair maiden. "She has done growing! It is time for her to get married into some good family, — yes, she ought to marry Lukáshka."

Mother Ulítka had cares of her own; she remained sitting on the threshold, and was lost in thought, until her daughter called her.

VI.

The male population of the village pass their time in expeditions and in cordons, or posts, as the Cossacks call them.

This very Lukáshka the "Saver," of whom the two old women had been speaking, was stationed that evening in a watch-tower of the Nízhne-Protók post. This Nízhne-Protók post is situated on the bank of the Térek. Leaning on the balustrade of the tower, he blinked and looked into the distance beyond the Térek, or upon his Cossack companions below him, and from time to time he chatted with them.

The sun was already approaching the snow-covered range which glistened white above the fleecy clouds. The clouds were billowing at the bases of the mountains, and assumed ever darker shades. The air was bathed in evening transparency. A fresh breeze blew from the wild overgrown forest; but near the post it was still warm.

The voices of the Cossacks at conversation rang clearer, and reëchoed in the air. The swift, cinnamon-coloured Térek stood out, with all its moving mass, more sharply from its immovable banks. It was beginning to fall, and here and there the wet sand looked dark brown on the shore and in the shallows.

On the opposite shore, right across from the cordon, there was nothing but a wilderness: only low desert reeds stretched over a vast expanse as far as the mountains. A little on one side, the clay houses, flat roofs, and funnel-shaped chimneys of a Chechén village could be seen on

the low bank. The keen eyes of the Cossack who stood on the tower watched, through the evening smoke of the peaceful village, the flitting figures of the Chechén women who moved in the distance, in their blue and red dresses.

Although the Cossacks expected that the abréks would cross over from the Tartar side and attack them at any time, but especially in May, when the forest along the Térek is so dense that a man on foot can hardly make his way through it, and when the river is so shallow that it can be forded on foot in some places; and although two days before a Cossack had galloped up from the commander of the regiment with a circular letter in which it said that, according to the information given by spies, a party of eight men intended to cross the Térek, and that, therefore, especial precautions were to be observed, — no special precautions were taken in the cordon. The Cossacks acted as though they were at home, and they walked about without their guns, and their horses were not saddled; some were engaged in fishing, some in carousing, and others in hunting. Only the horse of the officer of the day was saddled, and walked with three feet hobbled on the greensward along the forest, and only the Cossack on guard wore his mantle, musket, and sabre.

The under-officer, a tall, haggard Cossack, with an unusually long back and short legs and arms, in nothing but an unbuttoned half-coat, was sitting on the mound of the hut, and, with an expression of official laziness and ennui, closed his eyes, and rolled his head from one hand to the other. An old Cossack, with a broad, black beard, streaked with gray, in nothing but his shirt girded with a black strap, was lying near the water, and lazily watching the monotonously roaring water of the meandering Térek. The others, who were also tormented by the heat, were half-dressed; one was washing his linen in the Térek; another was plaiting a fishing-line; another was lying on the ground, in the hot sand of the bank, and mumbling a

song. One Cossack, with a haggard and swarthy face, lay, apparently dead drunk, on his belly near one of the walls of the hut, which some two hours before had been in the shade, but upon which now fell the burning slanting rays.

Lukáshka, who was stationed in the watch-tower, was a handsome fellow, about twenty years of age, and very much like his mother. His face and his whole figure expressed, in spite of the angularity of youth, great physical and moral strength. Although he had but lately been taken into the army, one could see from the broad features of his face and from the calm self-confidence of his attitude that he had already succeeded in acquiring that martial and somewhat proud bearing, which is characteristic of the Cossacks and of people in general, who are continually in arms, — that he was a Cossack, and that he knew his full value. His broad mantle was torn in places; his cap was poised jauntily in Chechén fashion; his leggings fell below his knees. His attire was not rich, but it fitted him with that Cossack foppishness which consists in the imitation of the Chechén braves.

In a real brave everything hangs loosely and carelessly in tatters; only the weapons are of the richest. But this ragged attire and the weapons are put on, girded, and adjusted in a certain fashion, which not everybody can acquire, and which immediately catches the eye of a Cossack or mountaineer. Lukáshka had this appearance of a Chechén brave. Placing his hands under his sabre, and blinking with his eyes, he kept looking at the distant village. The separate features of his face were not handsome; but upon surveying at once his stately form, and his black-browed and intelligent face, everybody would involuntarily say, "He is a fine chap!"

"What a lot of women that village is pouring out!" he said, in a sharp voice, lazily opening his shining white teeth, and speaking to nobody in particular.

Nazárka, who was lying below, immediately raised his head and said:

"They must be going for water."

"I ought to fire a shot to frighten them," said Lukáshka, laughing. "How they would squirm!"

"You can't shoot so far!"

"Indeed? Mine will shoot beyond them. Just give me a chance! When their holiday comes, I will visit Giréy-khan, and will drink their millet beer," said Lukáshka, angrily warding off the gnats that pestered him.

A rustling in the forest attracted the attention of the Cossacks. A spotted mongrel pointer, scenting a trail, and excitedly wagging his hairless tail, ran up to the cordon. Lukáshka recognized the hunting-dog of his neighbour, Uncle Eróshka, and soon after he made out in the thicket the moving form of the hunter himself.

Uncle Eróshka was a Cossack of enormous stature, with a broad, snow-white beard, and such broad shoulders and chest that in the forest, where there was nobody with whom he could be compared, he appeared, on account of the excellent proportion of all his strong limbs, rather undersized. He wore a ragged, tucked-up coat, buckskin shoes tied with twine to his rag socks, and a rumpled white cap. On his back he carried, over one shoulder, a snare for pheasants, and a bag with a chicken and a falcon for alluring hawks; over the other shoulder he carried a dead wildcat attached to a leather strap; he also carried on his back, stuck behind his belt, a pouch with bullets, powder, and bread, a horsetail with which to switch off the gnats, a large dagger in a torn, blood-stained sheath, and a brace of dead pheasants. When he saw the cordon he stopped.

"O Lyam!" he shouted to his dog in such a sonorous bass that the echo was repeated far in the woods; he shifted on his shoulder the huge percussion-gun, which the Cossacks call "flinta," and raised his cap.

"A good day to you, good people! Oh, there!" he turned to the Cossacks, in the same powerful and joyful voice; he spoke without effort, and yet as loud as if he were talking to some one across the river.

"A good day to you, uncle!" merrily sounded the youthful voices of the Cossacks, from all sides.

"Well, have you seen anything? Do tell me!" cried Uncle Eróshka, wiping the sweat from his broad, red face with the sleeve of his mantle.

"Listen, uncle? There is some hawk living here in the plane-tree! Every evening he goes circling in the air," said Nazárka, blinking with his eye, and twitching his shoulder and leg.

"You don't say?" the old man said, incredulously.

"Truly, uncle, you watch awhile," insisted Nazárka, laughing.

The Cossacks all laughed.

The jester had not seen any hawk; but it had long become a habit with the young Cossacks of the cordon to tease and deceive Uncle Eróshka every time he came near them.

"Oh, you fool, talking rubbish!" said Lukáshka from the watch-tower to Nazárka.

Nazárka at once grew silent.

"I must watch, and I will," said the old man, to the great amusement of the Cossacks. "Have you seen any boars?"

"The idea! Watching boars!" said the under-officer, glad to have an opportunity to divert himself, rolling over, and scratching his long back with both his hands. "We have to catch abréks here, and not boars. Uncle, haven't you heard anything, eh?" he added, blinking without cause, and opening his even row of white teeth.

"Abréks?" said the old man. "No, I have not. Well, have you any red wine? Let me have a drink, good man! I am tired, really, I am. Just give me a

chance, and I will bring you some venison, really, I will. Now, let me have it," he added.

"Are you going to watch all night?" the under-officer asked, as if not hearing what he had said.

"I want to stay up a night," said Uncle Eróshka. "Maybe God will grant me to kill something by the holidays, and then I will give you some, really, I will!"

"Uncle! Ho, there, uncle!" shouted Lukáshka from above, so loudly that all the Cossacks looked up to him. "You go up to the upper arm of the river, there is a fine herd there. I am not lying. Bang! The other day one of us Cossacks killed one there. I am telling the truth," he added, adjusting the musket on his back, in a voice which left no doubt that he was not jesting.

"Oh, Lukáshka the 'Saver' is here!" said the old man, looking up. "Where did he shoot?"

"You did not see me! I must be very small!" said Lukáshka. "Near the very ditch, uncle," he added, earnestly, shaking his head. "We were walking along the ditch, when there was a crackling noise, but my gun was in its case. Ilyá banged away. Uncle, I will show you the place; it is not far from here. Just give me a chance. I know all the paths. Uncle Mosév!" he added to the under-officer, with determination and almost commandingly. "It is time to relieve the guard!" and, picking up his gun, he began to come down from the tower, without waiting for the order.

"Come down!" said the under-officer, after awhile, looking around him. "It is your watch, isn't it, Gúrka? Go! Your Lukáshka is getting to be clever," added the under-officer, turning to the old man. "He goes a-hunting like you, and can't stay at home; the other day he killed one!"

VII.

The sun had disappeared, and the shadows of the night rapidly advanced from the forest. The Cossacks had finished their occupations at the cordon, and were getting ready to go to the hut for supper. Only the old man, in expectation of the hawk, remained under the plane-tree, pulling at the cord by which the falcon was tied. The hawk sat on a tree, but did not descend upon the chicken.

Lukáshka leisurely placed in the pheasant track, in the blackthorn grove, nooses with which to catch the pheasants, and sang one song after another. In spite of his tall stature and big hands, every kind of work, large and small, was, it appeared, equally successful in Lukáshka's hands.

"O Luká!" he heard Nazárka's shrill voice from near by in the grove. "The Cossacks have gone to their supper."

Nazárka was making his way through the blackthorn, with a pheasant under his arm, and finally crawled out on the foot-path.

"Oh!" said Lukáshka, growing silent for a moment. "Where did you get that cock? It must be my snare."

Nazárka was of the same age as Lukáshka, and had entered the army, like him, in the spring.

He was a short, homely, lean, sickly man, with a squeaky voice that grated upon the ears. He was a neighbour and friend of Lukáshka. Lukáshka was sitting in Tartar fashion on the grass, and fixing the nooses.

"I do not know whose, but very likely yours."

"Was it beyond the hole near the plane-tree? That is mine, I placed it there yesterday."

Lukáshka got up, and looked at the pheasant. He patted his dark blue head, which the cock stretched forward in fright, rolling his eyes, and took him into his hands.

"We shall prepare a pilau to-day. Go and kill him, and pick his feathers!"

"Shall we eat it alone, or shall we give it to the under-officer?"

"He has had enough."

"I am afraid to kill them," said Nazárka.

"Let me have him!"

Lukáshka took out his knife from beneath his dagger, and drew it rapidly across the bird's neck. The bird fluttered, but before he had time to open his wings his bloody head was bent back and hung down.

"This is the way it is done," said Lukáshka, throwing down the cock. "It will be a fat pilau."

Nazárka shuddered, looking at the bird.

"Listen, Luká, the devil will send us again into the 'secret,'" he added, as he raised the pheasant, meaning the under-officer by the word "devil." "He has sent Fomúshkin for some red wine, it was his turn. Every night we go out, the enemy comes out against us."

Lukáshka walked, whistling, along the cordon.

"Pick up the twine!" he shouted.

Nazárka obeyed him.

"I will tell him to-day, really I will," continued Nazárka. "We will say we won't go, because we are tired, and that is the end of it. You tell him that; he will listen to you. What sense is there in going?"

"Now this is not worth talking about!" said Lukáshka, evidently thinking of something else. "Nonsense! It would be insulting if he drove us out of the village for

the night. For there you can have a good time, but here? Whether in the cordon, or in the 'secret,' is one and the same. Really!"

"And will you come down to the village?"

"I will, on the holiday."

"Gúrka said that your Dunáyka is keeping company with Fomúshkin," suddenly said Nazárka.

"The devil take her!" answered Lukáshka, grinning with his even white teeth, but not laughing. "Can't I find another?"

"Gúrka said like this: he went to see her, says he, and her husband was not there. Fomúshkin was there, eating a pie. He stayed awhile, and went away; under the window he heard her say, 'The devil is gone; why, darling, do you not eat the pie? And,' says she, 'don't go home to sleep!' And he said under the window, 'That is fine!'"

"You are lying!"

"Really, upon my word!"

Lukáshka was silent.

"Well, if she has found another, the deuce take her. There are lots of girls. I am tired of her, anyway."

"What a devil you are!" said Nazárka. "You had better try to get into the graces of Maryánka, the ensign's. She is not keeping company with anybody?"

Lukáshka frowned. "Maryánka! It is all the same!" he said.

"Well, you tackle her—"

"What do you think? Are there not enough of them in the village?"

And Lukáshka again whistled, and walked along the cordon, tearing off leaves and branches. As he walked between some bushes, he suddenly noticed a smooth withe; he stopped, took out his knife from under his dagger, and cut it off. "It will make a fine ramrod," he said, swishing the withe in the air.

The Cossacks were at their supper in the clay vestibule of the cordon; they were seated on the floor, around a low Tartar table, and conversing about whose turn it would be to go to the "secret."

"Who goes to-day?" cried one of the Cossacks, turning to the under-officer through the open door of the hut.

"Who will go?" replied the under-officer. "Uncle Burlák has been there, Fomúshkin has been," he said, with some indecision. "You go, eh? You and Nazárka," he turned to Lukáshka, "and Ergushóv will go, if he has had his sleep."

"You never have your sleep, how should he?" said Nazárka, half-loud.

The Cossacks laughed.

Ergushóv was the very Cossack who was drunk, and had been asleep near the hut. He had just waked and, rubbing his eyes, waddled into the vestibule.

Lukáshka rose, and got his gun in shape.

"Be quick about it; have your supper, and go!" said the under-officer. Without waiting for an expression of consent, the under-officer closed the door, evidently having little hope that the Cossacks would obey him. "If I were not commanded, I would not send you; but the captain might run into us, before we know it. And besides, they say eight abréks have crossed over."

"Well, we must go," said Ergushóv, "it's the order! You can't do otherwise, — times are such. I say, we must go."

Lukáshka, in the meantime, held with both hands a big piece of the pheasant before his mouth, and, looking now at the under-officer, and now at Nazárka, was apparently quite indifferent to what was going on around him, and laughed at both of them. The Cossacks had not yet gone away to the "secret" when Uncle Eróshka, who

had sat up until night under the plane-tree, without accomplishing anything, entered into the dark vestibule.

"Well, boys," boomed his bass, in the low vestibule, "I will go with you, — you will lie in ambush for Chechéns, and I for boars."

VIII.

It was quite dark when Uncle Eróshka and the three Cossacks of the cordon, in felt mantles, and with their guns over their shoulders, walked down the Térek to the place which had been designated as the ambush. Nazárka did not want to go at all; but Lukáshka shouted to him, and they got quickly ready. After having walked a few steps in silence, the Cossacks turned away from the ditch, and over an almost imperceptible foot-path through the reeds walked up to the Térek. Near the bank lay a thick black log, cast out by the river, and the reeds around the log looked freshly crushed.

"Shall we 'sit' here?" said Nazárka.

"Why not?" said Lukáshka. "Sit down here; I will be back in a minute, as soon as I have shown the place to uncle."

"This is a very fine place. We can't be seen, but we can see everything," said Ergushóv. "We had better sit here; it is a first-class place."

Nazárka and Ergushóv spread out their mantles behind the log, and Lukáshka went away a distance with Uncle Eróshka.

"Not far from here, uncle," said Lukáshka, stepping cautiously in front of the old man, "I will show you where they passed. I, my friend, am the only one who knows."

"Show me! You are a good fellow," answered the old man, also in a whisper.

Having taken a few steps, Lukáshka stopped, bent over a puddle, and whistled. "Here they came to drink, you see," he said, just audibly, pointing to a fresh track.

"The Lord preserve you," answered the old man. "The boar must be in the wallow beyond the ditch," he added. "I will sit here, and you go."

Lukáshka shifted his mantle, and went by himself back along the bank, casting rapid glances, now on the left to the wall of reeds, now on the Térek, which foamed below the bank. "He is himself watching, or creeping along somewhere," he thought about the Chechéns. Suddenly a loud rustling and splashing in the water made him shudder and grasp his musket. Upon the shore leaped, breathing heavily, a boar, and the black form, which for a moment stood out from the shining surface of the water, disappeared in the reeds. Luká quickly took his gun and aimed, but before he had a chance to shoot, the boar was lost in the thicket. He spit out in anger, and walked on. When he came to the place of ambush, he again stopped, and whistled lightly. He received an answer, and walked up to his companions.

Nazárka was rolled up in his mantle, and asleep. Ergushóv was sitting with his legs crossed under him; he moved a little, so as to make place for Lukáshka.

"How jolly it is to 'sit'! Really, it is a fine place," he said. "Have you settled him?"

"I have shown him the place," replied Lukáshka, spreading his mantle. "I just scared up a strapping boar near the water. It must be the same one. Did you hear the noise he made?"

"I did hear the noise, and I knew at once it must be an animal. I thought you had scared up the beast," said Ergushóv, wrapping himself in his mantle. "I will now take a nap," he added. "Wake me after cockcrow; because, that's the order. First I'll take a nap, and then you, and I will sit up. That's right."

"Thank you, I do not care to sleep," answered Lukáshka.

The night was dark, warm, and calm. The stars were shining only on one side of the horizon; the other, greater part of the sky, on the side of the mountains, was shrouded by one large cloud. This black cloud, uniting with the mountains, was not agitated by the wind, but moved slowly farther and farther, its curving edges standing out sharply in the deep, starry heaven.

Only in front of him the Cossack could see the Térek and the dim distance; behind him and on both sides he was surrounded by a wall of reeds. From time to time the reeds began to wave and rustle against each other, without any apparent cause. Below, the waving cattails looked like bushy branches of trees against the bright edge of the sky. In front of him, at his very feet, was the bank, below which the river was roaring.

Farther away the gleaming mass of moving cinnamon-coloured water monotonously rippled near the shoals and along the bank. Still farther, the water, and bank, and cloud, all blended into impenetrable darkness.

On the surface of the water were long-drawn shadows, which the experienced eye of the Cossack recognized as tree-trunks carried down by the current. Now and then the sheet-lightning, reflecting in the water, as in a dark mirror, indicated the line of the opposite declivitous bank.

The even sounds of the night, the rustling of the reeds, the snoring of the Cossacks, the buzzing of the gnats, and the roaring of the water were occasionally interrupted by a distant shot, the plunge of the bank caving in, the splashing of a big fish, and the crashing of an animal through the wild, overgrown forest.

Once an owl flew down the Térek, flapping its wings together exactly after every two strokes. Right over the Cossacks' heads it turned toward the forest, this time

flapping its wings after every stroke, and not alternately, and then fluttered about for a long time before alighting on an old plane-tree. At every such unexpected sound, the waking Cossack strained his ears, blinked, and leisurely fingered his musket.

The greater part of the night had passed. The black cloud, moving to the west, disclosed behind its ragged edges the clear, starry heaven, and the tipping golden horn of the moon gleamed red above the mountains. It was getting chilly.

Nazárka awoke, said something, and again fell asleep. Lukáshka, being tired, got up, took his knife from behind his dagger, and began to whittle the stick into a ramrod. He was thinking how the Chechéns were living there in the mountains; how their braves crossed on this side; how they were not afraid of the Cossacks; and how they might cross in another place. And he craned his neck, and looked down the river, but he could see nothing. Glancing now and then at the river and at the distant shore which was feebly differentiated from the water in the pale light of the moon, he stopped thinking of the Chechéns, and only waited for the time to wake his companions, and go back to the village. In the village he thought of Dúnka, his little soul, as the Cossacks call their sweethearts, and he was angry.

There were signs of the morning. A silvery mist gleamed over the water, and some young eagles uttered a shrill whistle near him, and flapped their wings. Finally, the crowing of the first cock was borne afar from the village, then another protracted cockcrow, to which other voices answered.

"It is time to wake them," thought Lukáshka, having finished his ramrod, and feeling that his eyelids were getting heavy. He turned to his companions, and tried to make out to whom each pair of legs belonged. But suddenly it appeared to him that something splashed on

the other side of the Térek, and he once more gazed at the dawning horizon of the mountains, under the tipping sickle of the moon, at the line of the opposite shore, at the Térek, and at the trunks which were distinctly visible in the current. It seemed to him that he was in motion, and that the Térek with the tree-trunks was stationary; but that lasted only a minute. He looked down once more.

One large black trunk with a bough more especially attracted his attention. It was moving strangely in the middle of the stream, without rolling or twisting. He even thought that it did not follow the current, but made across the river toward a shoal. Lukáshka craned his neck, and began to watch it with fixed attention. The trunk reached the shoal, where it stopped; there was something moving there. Lukáshka was sure he had seen a hand rise from underneath the log.

"I will kill an abrék all by myself!" he thought, seized his gun without undue haste, but swiftly planted his forked support, placed his gun over it, softly raised the hammer, holding it with his fingers, and, holding his breath, kept a sharp lookout, and began to aim.

"I will not wake them," he thought. Still, his heart began to beat so powerfully in his breast, that he stopped to listen. The log suddenly splashed, and again made straight for our shore.

"It would be dreadful if I let him through!" he thought, and suddenly, in the feeble moonlight, a Tartar head flashed in front of the log. He aimed straight at that head. It seemed to him to be very near, at the end of his barrel. He looked across.

"That is it, an abrék," he thought joyfully, and suddenly getting up on his knees, he again adjusted the gun, looked for the sight, which was barely visible at the end of the long barrel, and, according to a Cossack custom, acquired in childhood, pronounced "To the Father and

the Son," and pulled the trigger. The flash for a moment lighted up the reeds and the water. The sharp, crackling sound of the discharge rang out over the river, and passed into a distant rumble. The log no longer swam across the river, but down the current, rolling and quivering.

"Hold him, I say!" cried Ergushóv, fingering his musket, and raising himself behind the log.

"Keep quiet, devil!" Lukáshka whispered to him with clinched teeth. "Abréks!"

"Whom did you shoot?" asked Nazárka. "Whom did you shoot, Lukáshka?"

Lukáshka did not answer. He loaded his gun, and watched the log that was carried down the stream. It stopped on a shoal, not far off, and something large, moving on the water, appeared from behind it.

"What did you shoot? Why don't you tell?" repeated the Cossacks.

"Abréks, I told you," repeated Lukáshka.

"Stop guying us! The gun, I guess, went off by itself!"

"I have killed an abrék! That's what I have killed!" said Lukáshka, in a voice trembling with excitement, leaping to his feet. "A man was swimming — " he said, pointing to the shoal. "I have killed him. Look there!"

"Stop telling lies!" said Ergushóv, rubbing his eyes.

"What lies? Look there! Look," said Lukáshka, grabbing him by the shoulders and bending him downward toward him with such force that Ergushóv groaned.

Ergushóv looked in the direction pointed out by Lukáshka, and, noticing a human form there, at once changed his tone.

"I declare! I tell you, there will be others. I tell you for sure," he said, quietly, and began to examine his musket. "That was the leader who was making across;

they are already here, or not far away, on the other shore; I am telling you for sure."

Lukáshka ungirded himself, and began to take off his mantle.

"Whither do you want to go, fool?" cried Ergushóv. "You just move, and it will be up with you, I am telling you for sure. If you have killed him he will not get away. Let me have some powder. Have you any? Nazár! You go at once to the cordon, but don't go along the bank; they'll kill you, I am telling you for sure."

"You will see me go alone! Go yourself!" Nazárka said, angrily.

Lukáshka took off his mantle, and walked up to the bank.

"Don't expose yourself, I tell you," said Ergushóv, pouring powder on the pan of his gun. "I see he is not moving now. It is not far to morning, and by that time they'll come up from the cordon. Go on, Nazárka! Oh, you are afraid! Don't be afraid, I say."

"Lukáshka, Lukáshka," said Nazárka, "tell us how you killed him."

Lukáshka changed his mind about going immediately into the water.

"Go to the cordon at once, and I will stay here. Tell the Cossacks to scatter. If they are on this side, we ought to catch them."

"I say they will get away," said Ergushóv, rising. "We ought to catch them, that's so."

And Ergushóv and Nazárka got up, and, crossing themselves, went to the cordon, not along the bank, but making their way through the buckthorns and getting out on the forest path.

"Look out, Lukáshka, don't stir!" said Ergushóv, "or they'll cut your throat here. Be on the lookout, I tell you."

"Go on, I know," said Lukáshka, and, examining his gun, he took up his seat behind the log.

Lukáshka sat all alone, watching the shoal, and listening for the Cossacks; but it was quite a distance to the cordon, and impatience tormented him; he was dreadfully afraid that the abréks who came with the man he had killed would get away. He was just as much in dread that the abréks would get away, as he had been mortified the night before at the escape of the boar. He gazed all around him, and at the opposite bank, expecting to see a man any time; he planted his forked support, and was ready to shoot. It did not even occur to him that he might be killed.

IX.

Day was dawning. The whole form of the Chechén, which had been carried to the shoal, and was barely moving there, was now distinctly visible. Suddenly the reeds crashed near the Cossack, steps were heard, and the cattails came into motion. The Cossack cocked his gun, and said, "To the Father and the Son." As soon as the hammer clicked, the steps were silenced.

"O Cossacks! Don't kill uncle," was heard the quiet bass, and, pushing aside the reeds, Uncle Eróshka stood right before him.

"I came very near killing you, upon my word!" said Lukáshka.

"What have you shot?" asked the old man.

The melodious voice of the old man, ringing through the forest and down the river, suddenly broke the stillness and mystery of the night, which had surrounded the Cossack. It seemed as though it had suddenly become lighter and brighter.

"Now, you have seen nothing, uncle, but I have killed a beast," said Lukáshka, uncocking his gun, and rising in feigned composure.

The old man did not take his eyes off the clearly discernible white back, around which the Térek rippled.

"He had been swimming with the log on his back. I watched for him. Just look there! There! He is in blue trousers, and I think there is a gun — You see, don't you?" said Lukáshka.

"Of course I see!" said the old man, angrily, and there

was a solemn and austere expression in his face. "You have killed a brave," he said, as though with regret.

"I was sitting, and suddenly I saw something black on the other side. I had almost made him out there: it looked as though a man had walked up and dropped into the river. What was it? A log, a big log was swimming, not down the current, but straight across. I looked, and there a head peeped out from underneath it. What is that? I aimed, but I could not see behind the reeds. He stood up, the beast, having heard me, no doubt, and crawled out on a shoal, and looked about him. 'You are mistaken,' thought I, 'you will not get away.' He crept up, and looked around. (I felt like choking!) I fixed the gun, did not stir, and waited. He stood awhile, and again started swimming; and when he swam out in the moon, his back could be seen. 'To the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost!' I looked, after the smoke had cleared away, and saw that he was struggling. He groaned, or I thought he did. 'Well, thank the Lord,' I thought, 'I have killed him!' And when he was carried on the shoal, and he got out, and wanted to get up, he saw that he had no strength. He floundered and floundered, and lay down. It is clear now, and one can see everything. He does not stir; no doubt he is dead. The Cossacks have gone to the cordon, to keep the others from escaping!"

"So you have caught him!" said the old man. "It is far now, my friend—" And he again shook his head gloomily. At that moment Cossacks on foot and on horseback could be heard along the bank, conversing loudly and crashing through the branches.

"You are a fine fellow, Lukáshka! Pull him to the shore," shouted one of the Cossacks.

Lukáshka did not wait for the skiff, but began to undress himself, keeping all the time a close watch on his prey.

"Wait, Nazárka is bringing up a skiff," cried the under-officer.

"Fool! He may be alive! He is feigning! Take along a dagger," cried another Cossack.

"Nonsense!" cried Lukáshka, taking off his trousers. He undressed himself in a trice, crossed himself, and, leaping up, jumped into the water with a splash; he took a plunge, reached out far with his white arms, and raising his back high out of the water, and struggling against the current, made across the Térek, toward the shoal. A crowd of Cossacks were talking loudly on the shore, a few voices at a time. Three horsemen rode far around. The skiff appeared around a bend. Lukáshka rose on the shoal, bent over the body, and rolled it around once or twice. "He is certainly dead!" rang out Lukáshka's voice from there.

The Chechén had been shot through his head. He wore blue trousers, a shirt, and a mantle; and a gun and a dagger were tied to his back. Above it all was fastened a large bough which had at first mystified Lukáshka.

"That's the way the carp was caught!" said one of the Cossacks, who were standing around, when the body of the Chechén was dragged out of the skiff, and lay on the bank, crushing the grass.

"How yellow he is!" said another.

"Where have ours gone to find them? They must all be on the other side. If he were not the leader, he would not have swum in this fashion. What sense would there be in swimming all alone?" said a third.

"I say he must have been a clever fellow, to have gone ahead of the rest. A first-class brave!" Lukáshka remarked, sarcastically, squeezing out his wet clothes on the shore, and shuddering all the time. "His beard is painted and cropped."

"And he had fixed his coat in a bag on his back. This made it easier for him to swim," some one remarked.

"Listen, Lukáshka," said the under-officer, who was holding the gun and dagger that had been taken from the dead man. "You take the dagger and the coat; and for the gun come and get three roubles. You see it has a rift," he added, blowing down the barrel, "but I should like to have it as a memento."

Lukáshka did not reply; he was evidently annoyed at this begging, but he knew that there was no escaping it.

"Well, the devil!" he said, frowning, and throwing the coat down on the ground. "If it were a decent coat, but it is only a gabardine."

"It will do to haul wood in," said another Cossack.

"Mosév! I will go home," said Lukáshka, evidently forgetting his annoyance, and trying to make good use of his present to his superior.

"Go, why not?"

"Take him down to the cordon, boys," the under-officer said, turning to the Cossacks, all the time examining the gun. "And we must make a tent over his body. They may come down from the mountains to ransom it."

"It is not too hot yet," some one said.

"Won't the jackals tear him up? Would that be well?" one of the Cossacks remarked.

"We will place a sentinel near by. They will come to ransom the body, and it would not do to have it all torn."

"Well, Lukáshka, you may say what you please, but you will have to treat the boys to a bucketful," the under-officer added, merrily.

"That is the custom," the Cossacks chimed in. "Just see the luck God has given him! He has not seen anything yet, but has already killed an abrék."

"Buy the dagger and the coat of me! I want all the money I can get. I will sell the trousers, too. God be with you," said Lukáshka. "They won't fit me. — he was a lean devil."

One Cossack bought the coat for a rouble. Another gave two bucketfuls for the dagger.

"You will have a drink, boys, for I will set up a bucket," said Lukáshka. "I'll fetch it myself from the village."

"And cut up the trousers for kerchiefs for the girls," said Nazárka.

The Cossacks roared.

"Stop your laughing!" said the under-officer. "Drag off the body! Who wants to keep such a thing near the hut —"

"Why are you standing around? Drag him over here, boys!" Lukáshka shouted in a voice of command to the Cossacks, who did not like to touch the body, but carried out his orders as though he were their superior. After dragging the body away for a few steps, the Cossacks dropped its legs, which hung down lifeless; they stepped aside, and stood for a moment in silence. Nazárka walked up to the body, and straightened out the head, which had bent under, so that the round blood-stained wound above the temple and the face of the dead man could be seen.

"You see what a mark he has made there! Hit him right in his brain!" he said. "He will not be lost. His people will identify him."

No one said a word, and again the angel of silence passed over the Cossacks.

The sun had risen, and with its broken beams lighted up the dewy foliage. The Térek roared not far off, in the awakening forest. The pheasants called to each other on all sides, greeting the morning. The Cossacks stood, silent and motionless, around the dead man, and gazed at him. His cinnamon-coloured body, in nothing but blue trousers, turned darker from having been soaked in the water, and held together by a belt over his hollow belly, was slender and beautiful. His muscular arms lay straight, down his ribs. His livid, freshly shaven round head, with the

clotted wound at one side, was bent back. The smooth, sunburnt forehead stood out sharply from his shaven head. The glassy, open eyes, with their pupils standing low, looked upwards, apparently beyond everything. On his thin lips, with their drawn edges, which could be seen behind his clipped red moustache, there seemed to hover a good-natured, delicate smile. The small finger joints were covered with red hairs; the fingers were bent inwardly, and the nails were dyed red.

Lukáshka was not yet dressed. He was wet; his neck was redder, and his eyes were sparkling more than usual; his broad cheek-bones quivered; from his white, healthy body a barely perceptible evaporation rose into the fresh morning air.

"He was a man, too!" he said, apparently admiring the dead body.

"Yes, if he had gotten you, he would not have let you off," said one of the Cossacks.

The angel of silence flew away. The Cossacks began to stir, and to chat. Two went to cut some brush for the tent. Others leisurely walked back to the cordon. Lukáshka and Nazárka hastened to get ready for the village.

Half an hour later, Lukáshka and Nazárka, almost on a run, were making their way home, through the dense forest which separated the Térek from their village; they did not cease talking.

"Don't tell her, remember, that I have sent you. You just go and see whether her husband is at home," said Lukáshka, in a shrill voice.

"And I will go and see Yámka. We will have a good time, won't we?" asked submissive Nazárka.

"When are we to have a good time, if not to-day?" answered Lukásha.

Upon arriving at the village the Cossacks drank themselves drunk, and went to sleep until the evening.

X.

Two days after this occurrence, two companies of infantry of the Army of the Caucasus came to take up quarters in the village of Novomlín. The company wagons already stood unhitched in the square. The cooks had dug a hole and brought together from the different yards any chips that were not securely put away, and were cooking soup. The corporals were calling the roll. The soldiers of the convoy were driving down stakes to tie their horses to. The quartermaster-sergeants, who were at home here, rushed through the streets and lanes, assigning quarters to the officers and soldiers.

Here were green caissons drawn up in battle array. Here were the company's carts and their horses. Here were the kettles in which the buckwheat porridge was cooked. Here was the captain, and the lieutenant, and Onisím Mikháylovich, the sergeant.

And all this found itself in the very village where, so they said, the companies were ordered to be stationed; consequently the companies were at home. Why are they stationed here? Who are these Cossacks? Do they like to have soldiers stationed in their village? Are they dissenters or not? That is nobody's business.

Being dismissed after roll-call, the tired and dusty soldiers, noisily and in disorder, like a settling swarm of bees, scattered over the squares and streets. Paying not the least attention to the unfriendly attitude of the Cossacks, they entered the huts, in groups of two and three, chattering merrily and clattering with their guns; they hung

up their accoutrements, opened their bags, and joked with the women.

A large group of soldiers, with pipes between their teeth, gathered in their favourite place, near the gruel-kettles. They now watched the smoke which rose imperceptibly to the burning sky, and high up in the air condensed into a white cloud, or the camp-fire which trembled in the clear air like melted glass; they bantered and ridiculed the Cossack men and women for living differently from the Russians.

In all the yards soldiers could be seen; one could hear their laughter, and the furious, shrill voices of the Cossack women, defending their houses, and refusing water and utensils. Little boys and girls pressed close to their mothers and to each other, following, with an expression of amazement, all the unfamiliar movements of the soldiers, or they ran after them at a respectful distance. The old Cossacks came out of their cabins, sat down on the mounds, and gloomily and in silence watched the bustle of the soldiers, as though giving everything up in despair, and not understanding what would come of it all.

Olénin, who had been enrolled in the Army of the Caucasus for the last three months, was assigned quarters with the Ensign Ilyá Vasílevich, that is, with Mother Ulítka, in one of the best cabins in the village.

"What will this be, Dmítri Andréevich?" said Vanyúsha, out of breath, to Olénin, who, dressed in a mantle, after a five-hour ride, merrily cantered on his Kabardá horse, which he had purchased at Gróznaya, into the yard of the assigned quarters.

"Why so, Iván Vasílevich?" he asked, patting his horse, and cheerfully looking at perspiring Vanyúsha, who, with his dishevelled hair and dejected face, had arrived with the baggage, and was now sorting out things.

Olénin appeared now an entirely different man. In-

stead of his shaven face, he now wore a young beard and moustache. Instead of his drawn face, sallow from nightly dissipations, there was a healthy ruddy tan on his cheeks and forehead and behind his ears. Instead of a clean new black dress coat, he wore a dirty white mantle with wide folds, and weapons. Instead of clean starched collars, the red collar of a half-coat of Persian silk fitted tightly around his sunburnt neck. He was clad in Circassian fashion, but not correctly so; anybody could have told that he was a Russian, and not a Chechén brave. Everything was correct, and yet wrong! But his whole figure breathed health, cheerfulness, and self-satisfaction.

"It is all funny to you," said Vanyúsha, "but just try and talk with these people: they won't let you alone, and that is all. You can't get a word out of them." Vanyúsha angrily threw down an iron pail at the threshold. "They are anything but Russians!"

"You ought to have gone to the village commander!"

"But I do not know where all the places are," Vanyúsha replied, peevishly.

"Who has been insulting you?" Olénin asked, casting a glance around him.

"The devil knows them! Pshaw! The real master is not here; they say he has gone to a 'kríga.'[1] And the old woman is a devil, — the Lord preserve me from such," answered Vanyúsha, grasping his head. "I really do not know how we shall manage to live here. They are worse than Tartars, upon my word. What of it if they call themselves Christians? Take a Tartar, he is more gentlemanly. 'He has gone to the kríga!' I can't make out what they mean by 'kríga'!" Vanyúsha concluded, turning aside.

"What? They are not like our country people?" said Olénin, jestingly, remaining on his horse.

[1] A place near the bank, surrounded by a wattled fence, where fish are caught.

"Let me have the horse, if you please," said Vanyúsha, obviously put out by the new order of things, but submitting to fate.

"So a Tartar is more gentlemanly? Eh, Vanyúsha?" repeated Olénin, dismounting, and slapping his saddle.

"Yes, you can laugh! It seems funny to you!" said Vanyúsha, in an angry voice.

"Wait, don't get angry, Iván Vasílevich," answered Olénin, continuing to smile. "Just let me see the people, and you will see how I will settle them. We will have a glorious time yet! Only do not excite yourself!"

Vanyúsha did not retort anything; he blinked, contemptuously looked in the direction of his master, and shook his head. Vanyúsha looked upon Olénin only as upon his master. Olénin looked upon Vanyúsha only as upon his servant. They would both have been very much surprised if some one had told them that they were friends. Yet they were friends, without knowing it themselves. Vanyúsha had been taken to the house when he was eleven years old, when Olénin was of the same age. When Olénin was fifteen years old, he for awhile gave Vanyúsha lessons, and taught him to read French, of which fact Vanyúsha was exceedingly proud. And even now, in moments of cheerfulness, he was in the habit of dropping now and then a French word, whereat he grinned stupidly.

Olénin ran up to the porch of the cabin, and pushed the door open into the vestibule. Maryánka, in nothing but a rose-coloured shirt, as Cossack women are dressed at home, leaped away from the door in affright, and, pressing against the wall, covered the lower part of her face with the broad sleeve of her Tartar shirt. As Olénin opened the door still farther, he saw in the half-light the whole tall and stately figure of the young Cossack maiden. With the swift and eager curiosity of youth, he involuntarily noticed the strong, virgin form clearly outlined

under the thin chintz shirt, and the beautiful black eyes which were directed upon him with childlike terror and wild surprise.

"There she is!" thought Olénin. "Yes, there will be many more such," it suddenly occurred to him, and he opened another door of the cabin. Mother Ulítka, also in nothing but a shirt, was turned with her back toward him, and, bending over, was sweeping the floor.

"Good day, mother! I have come to ask about the quarters," he began.

The Cossack woman, without unbending, turned to him her austere, but still comely face.

"What did you come for? You want to make fun of me? What? I'll give you fun! The black plague take you!" she cried, looking askance at the stranger, with a scowl.

Olénin had imagined at first that the hard-working brave Army of the Caucasus, of which he was a member, would be received everywhere with joy, especially by the Cossacks, his companions of war, and therefore such a reception puzzled him. However, he did not become confused, and wished to explain that he intended to pay for his quarters, but the old woman would not let him finish his words.

"Why did you come? Who needs such a sore? You sandpapered snout! Just wait, the master will come, and he will show you the place! I do not need your damnable money. I guess we have seen that before! You will smoke up the room with your tobacco, and you mean to pay with money for it! We have not seen such a sore before! Oh, that they had shot your heart out!" she cried, in a shrill voice, interrupting Olénin.

"Evidently Vanyúsha is right," thought Olénin. "A Tartar is more gentlemanly," and accompanied by Mother Ulítka's curses, he walked out of the cabin. As he was going out, Maryánka, still in her rose-coloured shirt, but

wrapped up to her eyes in a white kerchief, suddenly flashed by him, and out of the vestibule. Rapidly tripping down the steps in her bare feet, she ran away from the entrance, stopped, cast with her smiling eyes a rapid glance upon the young man, and disappeared around the corner of the cabin.

The firm, youthful gait, the wild glance of the sparkling eyes beneath her white kerchief, and the stateliness of the fair maiden's strong frame now produced an even stronger impression upon Olénin. "It must be she!" he thought; and forgetting about his quarters, and all the time looking back at Maryánka, he walked up to Vanyúsha.

"You see, the girl is just as wild!" said Vanyúsha, who was still busy with the cart, but in somewhat better spirits. "She is just like a filly of the steppes. *La femme!*" he added, in a loud and solemn voice, and burst out laughing.

XI.

In the evening the master returned from his fishing expedition; upon discovering that he was to be paid for quarters, he pacified the old woman, and satisfied Vanyúsha's demands.

Everything was arranged in the new home. The proprietors passed over to the "warm" cabin, and, for three roubles a month, turned over the "cold" cabin to the yunker. Olénin took a lunch, and lay down for a nap. He awoke before evening, washed himself, cleaned his clothes, ate his dinner, and, lighting a cigarette, sat down near the window facing the street. The heat had subsided.

The slanting shadow of the cabin, with its carved ridge-piece, lay across the dusty street, and even bent upwards on the lower part of the house opposite. The sloping reed thatch of this house was gleaming in the rays of the setting sun. The air was growing cool. The village was still. The soldiers had found their quarters, and were quiet. The herds had not yet been driven home, and the people had not yet returned from their field labour.

Olénin's quarters were almost at the edge of the village. Now and then, somewhere far beyond the Térek, in the direction from which Olénin had come, could be heard the hollow reports of shots, somewhere in the Chechnyá, or in the Kumýk plain.

Olénin felt at ease after three months of camp life.

His well-washed face felt fresh, his strong body felt clean after the long march, and all his limbs felt strong and rested.

His mind, too, felt fresh and clear. He thought of the expedition, and the past peril. He recalled that he had behaved well during all the perils, that he was not worse than the rest, and that he had been received into the company of brave Caucasians. His Moscow recollections were now God knows where. His old life was wiped out, and a new, an entirely new life, in which no mistakes had yet been committed, began for him. He could, a new man among new people, earn here a new and good opinion of himself. He experienced the youthful feeling of a causeless happiness in life, and, looking now through the window at the boys spinning their tops in the shadow of the house, and now at his new neat lodging, he thought of how pleasantly he would arrange things in this unfamiliar life in the village. He also gazed at the mountains and at the sky, and with all his recollections and dreams mingled the austere feeling of the majesty of Nature. Life had begun differently from what he had expected, when he departed from Moscow, but, nevertheless, surpassing his expectation. The mountains, the mountains, the mountains were in everything he thought and felt.

"He has kissed his dog! He has licked the jug! Uncle Eróshka has kissed his dog!" suddenly cried the Cossack boys who were spinning their tops under the window, running to the lane. "He has kissed his dog! He has sold his dagger for drinks," cried the boys, crowding together and retreating.

These cries were directed to Uncle Eróshka, who, with his gun on his back and some pheasants in his belt, was returning from the hunt.

"It is my sin, boys, my sin!" he said, wildly waving his arms, and looking through the windows of the cabins on both sides of the road. "I have sold my dog for

drinks, it is my sin!" he repeated, apparently angry, but pretending that it made no difference to him.

Olénin was surprised at the boys' treatment of the old hunter, and he was still more struck by the expressive and intelligent face and by the powerful frame of the man whom they called Uncle Eróshka.

"Grandfather! Cossack!" he said, turning to him. "Come here, if you please!"

The old man looked at the window, and stopped.

"Good evening, good man!" he said, raising his cap above his clipped hair.

"Good evening, good man!" answered Olénin. "Why do the boys call that way to you?"

Uncle Eróshka walked up to the window.

"They are teasing me, an old man. That is nothing, I like it. Let them have their fun out of uncle," he said, in the firm singsong intonations, in which respectable old people speak. "Are you the commander of the soldiers?"

"No, I am a yunker. Where did you shoot these pheasants?" Olénin asked him.

"I shot three hens in the woods," answered the old man, turning to the window his broad back, where, with their heads stuck through the belt and staining the mantle, hung three pheasants. "Have you never seen any before?" he asked. "If you want to, you may have two. Here!" and he put two pheasants through the window. "Well, are you a hunter?" he asked him.

"I am, I myself killed four during the march."

"Four? That is a lot!" said the old man, sarcastically. "And are you a toper? Do you drink red wine?"

"Why not? I do like a drink now and then."

"Well, I see you are a fine fellow! We will be friends," said Uncle Eróshka.

"Come in," said Olénin, "and we will have some red wine!"

"I will," said the old man. "Take the pheasants!"

One could see by the old man's face that he took a liking to the yunker; and he immediately understood that he could have a drink without paying for it, and therefore it was all right to present him with two pheasants.

A few minutes later, the form of Uncle Eróshka appeared in the door of the cabin. It was only then that Olénin noticed the whole size and powerful build of the man, even though his cinnamon-coloured face, with its perfectly white long beard, was all furrowed with deep wrinkles of old age and hard labour. The muscles of his legs, arms, and shoulders were as full and firm as in a young man. On his head, deep scars, all healed over, were visible under his short hair. His thick venous neck was covered with checkered folds, as in an ox. His rough hands were all battered and scratched up.

He crossed the threshold with ease and agility, took off his gun and put it in the corner, with a rapid glance surveyed and estimated the private belongings that were lying in the room, and, without stamping his buckskin-clad, slanting feet on the floor, walked into the middle of the room. With him entered into the room a strong and disagreeable odour of red wine, brandy, powder, and clotted blood.

Uncle Eróshka bowed toward the images, straightened out his beard, and, walking up to Olénin, gave him his fat black hand.

"*Koshkildy!*" he said. This means, in Tartar, "We wish you health," or "Peace be with you," as they say.

"*Koshkildy!* I know," answered Olénin, giving him his hand.

"No, you do not know, you do not know the proper way, you fool!" said Uncle Eróshka, reproachfully shaking his head. "When they say '*Koshkildy*' to you, you must answer, '*Allah razi bo sun!* God save you!' That's the way, my father, and not '*Koshkildy!*' I'll

teach you everything. We had a Russian here, by the name of Ilyá Moséich: he and I were chums. He was a fine fellow. Toper, thief, hunter. Oh, what a hunter he was! I taught him everything."

"What are you going to teach me?" asked Olénin, becoming more and more interested in the old man.

"I will take you out hunting; I will teach you to catch fish; I will show the Chechéns to you; and if you want a sweetheart, I will find you one. That's the kind of a man I am! I am a joker!" and the old man burst out laughing. "I will sit down, my father, I am tired. *Karga?*" he added, with an interrogative look.

"What does *karga* mean?" asked Olénin.

"It means 'good' in the Georgian language. I am just saying it; it is a byword of mine, my favourite word. *Karga*, — when I say that, I mean I am joking. Now, father, order up some red wine. Have you a soldier who is serving you? Have you? Iván!" called out the old man. "All your soldiers are named Iván. Is yours Iván, too?"

"That's right, Iván, Vanyúsha! Please get some red wine from the landlord, and bring it here."

"It's all the same, Vanyúsha, or Iván. Why are all your soldiers called Iván? Iván!" repeated the old man. "You ask from the tapped cask. They have the best red wine in the village. Don't give more than thirty kopeks an eighth measure; remember, don't give any more, for she is a hag, and will — Our people are a damned, foolish lot," continued Uncle Eróshka, in a confidential tone, after Vanyúsha had left. "They do not regard you as men. You are worse than a Tartar to them. The Russians they call beggars. But, in my opinion, though you are a soldier, you are a man all the same, and you have a soul in you. Am I not judging right? Ilyá Moséich was a soldier, but what a fine fellow he was! Is it not so, my father? That's why ours do not like me; but

that makes no difference to me. I am a cheerful fellow; I love everybody, — I am Eróshka, that's right, my father!"

And the old man gently slapped the young man on the shoulder.

XII.

In the meantime, Vanyúsha, who had gotten all his house affairs in good order, had been shaved by the company barber, and had taken his trousers out of his bootlegs, as a sign that the company was now lodged in commodious quarters, was now in the best of spirits. He gazed attentively, but not malevolently, at Eróshka, as though he were a strange wild beast, shook his head at the floor which he had soiled, and, taking out from under the bench two empty bottles, went to see the landlady.

"Good evening, my good people!" he said, having decided to be particularly gentle. "My master has told me to buy some red wine. Fill these, good people!"

The old woman did not answer. The maiden was standing in front of a small Tartar mirror, and fixing a kerchief on her head; she looked silently at Vanyúsha.

"I will pay cash, worthy people," said Vanyúsha, rattling the copper coins in his pocket. "You be good, and we will be good, — and that will be best," he added.

"How much?" the old woman asked, curtly.

"An eighth measure."[1]

"Go, my dear, and draw it for them," said Mother Ulítka, turning to her daughter. "Draw it off from the cask that has been tapped, my darling."

The girl took the keys and a decanter, and walked out of the room together with Vanyúsha.

[1] That is, one-eighth of a "bucket," which latter is about two and a half gallons.

"Tell me who is that woman?" asked Olénin, pointing to Maryánka, who was just then passing by the window.

The old man winked, and nudged the young man with his elbow.

"Wait," he said, and leaned out of the window. "Kkhm! Kkhm!" he coughed and bellowed. "Maryánushka! O Maryánka! Love me, my darling! I am a joker," he added, in a whisper, turning to Olénin.

The girl did not turn her head, but, evenly and vigorously swinging her arms, passed by the window with the foppish, dashing gait peculiar to the Cossack women. She only cast a slow glance upon the old man with her black, shaded eyes.

"Love me, and you will be happy!" cried Eróshka, and, winking, looked questioningly at Olénin. "I am a dashing fellow, I am a joker," he added. "She is a queen, eh?"

"A beauty," said Olénin. "Call her up!"

"Not a bit of it!" said the old man. "They are trying to get her married to Lukáshka. Luká is a fine Cossack, a brave, — the other day he killed an abrék. I will find a better one for you. I will find you one that is all dressed in silk and silver. I told you I would get you one, and so I will. I'll find a beauty for you."

"You are an old man, and see what you are saying!" said Olénin. "This is sinful."

"Sinful? Where is the sin?" the old man answered, with determination. "Is it a sin to look at a pretty girl? A sin to stroll with one? A sin to love one? Is it so with you? No, my father, it is not a sin, but a salvation. God has made you, and He has made a girl. He, my friend, has made everything. And so it is not a sin to look at a pretty girl. That's what she is for: to be loved, and to be looked at. That's the way I judge, my good man."

Having crossed the yard and entered into the dark, cool outhouse, filled with casks, Maryánka, with the usual

prayer, walked up to one of them, and put in the siphon. Vanyúsha stood in the door and smiled, looking at her. It seemed very funny to him that she wore nothing but a shirt, which fitted her behind, but was tucked up in front, and still funnier that half-rouble pieces hung down from her neck. He thought that it was un-Russian, and that the people of his village would have a laugh if they saw such a girl. "*La fille comme c'est très bié*, for a change," he thought, "I will say now to my master."

"What are you gaping for, you devil?" suddenly cried the girl. "Let me have your decanter!"

Having filled the decanter with cool red wine, Maryánka handed it to Vanyúsha.

"Give the money to mother!" she said, pushing away Vanyúsha's hand with the money.

Vanyúsha smiled.

"What makes you so angry, my dear people?" he said, good-naturedly shuffling his feet, while the girl closed the cask.

She began to laugh.

"And are you kind people?"

"My master and I are very kind people," Vanyúsha replied, convincingly. "We are such kind people that wherever we have lived the people have been grateful to us. Because, you see, he is a nobleman."

The girl stopped and listened.

"Is he married, your master?" she asked.

"No! Our master is young and a bachelor. Because, you see, noblemen can never marry young," Vanyúsha replied, instructively.

"What do I know? He is as fat as a buffalo, and too young to marry! Is he the commander of the whole lot of you?" she asked.

"My master is a yunker, that means, not yet an officer. But he knows a lot more than a general, or any big man. Because, you see, not only our colonel, but the Tsar him-

self knows him," Vanyúsha explained, proudly. "We are not like any other military trash, but our master's father was a senator. He had a thousand souls, or more, and they send us a thousand roubles at a time. And that's why they always like us. Take many a captain, and he has no money. So what's the use?"

"Go, I want to lock up," the girl interrupted him.

Vanyúsha brought the wine, and he announced to Olénin that "*La fille c'est très joulie*," and immediately went away, with his stupid laugh.

XIII.

In the meantime, they were beating the tattoo in the square. The people were returning from their work. The herds were lowing in the gates, crowding together in a dusty, gold-like cloud, and the girls and women were bustling in the streets and yards, driving the cattle to their stalls.

The sun had entirely disappeared behind the distant snow-capped range. A bluish shadow was stretched out over the earth and sky. Over the darkling gardens the stars were barely gleaming, and the sounds slowly died down in the village. After housing their cattle, the Cossack women congregated in the corners of the streets, and sat down on the mounds, cracking pumpkin seeds. Maryánka joined one of these circles, after she had milked her two cows and the buffalo.

The circle consisted of a few women and girls, and one old Cossack.

They were talking about the dead abrék. The Cossack told the story, and the women asked him questions.

"I suppose he will get a good reward for it," said a Cossack woman.

"I should say so. They say they will send him a cross. Mosév did not treat him right. He took away his gun, but the authorities in Kizlyár found out about it."

"He is a mean fellow, that Mosév."

"I have heard them say that Lukáshka is here," said a girl.

"He and Nazárka are on a spree at Yámka's."

(Yámka was an unmarried, dissolute woman, who kept a saloon.)

"They say they have drunk half a bucket."

"Now that was a piece of luck for the 'Saver'!" said some one. "He is indeed a 'Saver'! I must say he is a fine fellow! Awfully clever! As brave as can be! His father, Kiryák, was a brave man, too! And he is just like his father. When he was killed, the whole village wept for him. There they are coming, I think," continued the speaker, pointing to the Cossacks who were moving in the street toward them. "Ergushóv is along with them. What a toper he is!"

Lukáshka, Nazárka, and Ergushóv, having emptied half a bucket, were walking to the girls. They were all redder in their faces than usual; particularly Cossack Ergushóv staggered along and, laughing loudly, kept punching Nazárka in his sides.

"Wenches, why don't you sing songs?" he shouted to the girls. "I say, sing for our amusement!"

"Have you passed a pleasant day? Have you passed a pleasant day?" were heard the greetings.

"What singing! Is this a holiday?" said a woman. "You are puffed up, so sing yourself!"

Ergushóv laughed out loud, and punched Nazárka. "Start a song, and I will sing, too. I am clever at that, I say."

"Well, beauties, are you asleep?" said Nazárka. "We have come from the cordon to have something to drink. And we have drunk to Lukáshka's good luck."

Lukáshka walked up to the circle, leisurely raised his lambskin cap, and stopped opposite the girls. His broad cheeks and his neck were flushed. He stood there and spoke softly and gravely; but in the deliberation and gravity of his movements there was more animation and strength than in Nazárka's prattle and bustle. He reminded one of a playful colt which raises its tail and

snorts, and then suddenly stops as though fastened to the ground by all its feet. Lukáshka stood quietly before the girls; his eyes were smiling; he said little, and looked now at his drunken companions, and now at the girls. When Maryánka came to the corner, he raised his cap with an even, leisurely motion, stepped aside, and again planted himself in front of her, lightly spreading his legs, thrusting his thumbs into the belt, and playing with his dagger. Maryánka returned his greeting by a gentle inclination of her head, sat down on the mound, and took some seeds out of the bosom of her shirt. Lukáshka looked at Maryánka, without turning his eyes away from her, and, cracking seeds, kept spitting out the shells. Everybody grew silent when Maryánka joined them.

"Well, are you going to stay long?" asked a woman, breaking the silence.

"Until to-morrow morning," Lukáshka answered, gravely.

"Well, God grant you a good advantage!" said the old Cossack. "I am glad. I have just been talking about you."

"And I say so, too," said drunken Ergushóv, laughing. "There are some guests here!" he added, pointing to a soldier who was passing by. "Soldiers' brandy is good. I like it!"

"They have sent us three devils," said a woman. "Grandfather went to the village elder's office, but they said that nothing could be done."

"Oh, so you have found out what woe is!" said Ergushóv.

"I suppose they have dirtied up your house with tobacco," said another woman. "Let them smoke all they want to in the yard, but I won't let them in the house. Even if the elder should come, I would not let them. They will steal, too. Look at the elder, that son of a devil! He has not quartered any soldiers upon himself."

"You don't like them!" again said Ergushóv.

"And they say that the girls have to make the beds for the soldiers, and fill them with red wine and mead," said Nazárka, spreading his legs like Lukáshka, and poising his cap jauntily, too.

Ergushóv roared and grasped and embraced a girl who was sitting nearest to him. "I tell you, it is so."

"Keep off, you pitch!" screamed the girl. "I will tell my mother."

"Tell her!" he cried. "But really, Nazárka is telling the truth: there was a circular letter about it, and he can read. That's so." And he was trying to hug another girl, the next one in order.

"Don't be so familiar, scamp!" laughingly shrieked ruddy, round-faced Ústenka, raising her hand to box his ears.

The Cossack stepped aside and almost fell.

"And they say that a girl has no strength. She almost killed me."

"You are regular pitch. The devil has brought you from the cordon," said Ústenka, and, turning away from him, snorted out with a laugh: "You sleepyhead, you have missed an abrék! He would have cut your throat, and that would have been well."

"You would have blubbered!" Nazárka said, and laughed.

"Just watch me blubbering!"

"You see, she does not even care. Would she weep? Nazárka, eh?" said Ergushóv.

Lukáshka was all the time gazing silently at Maryánka. His glance evidently embarrassed the girl.

"Say, Maryánka, have they quartered a commander on you?" he asked, moving up to her.

Maryánka, as usual, did not answer at once, and leisurely lifted her eyes on the Cossacks. Lukáshka's eyes were smiling, as though something special, quite different from

the conversation, were taking place between him and the girl.

"Yes, they are all right, for they have two cabins," said an old woman for Maryánka, "but at Fomúshkin's they have lodged their commander, and they say he has so filled up the room with his things that the Fomúshkins have no place left. Who has ever heard such a thing? They have driven a whole horde of them into the village! What is to be done?" she said. "And they will act here worse than the black plague!"

"They say they are going to build a bridge across the Térek," said one of the girls.

"And they told me," said Nazárka, walking up to Ústenka, "that they will dig a ditch to put the girls in, because they do not love young fellows." And again he made his favourite bow, at which all laughed, and Ergushóv immediately started to hug an old woman, passing by Maryánka, who was next in order.

"Why don't you hug Maryánka? Take them all in order!" said Nazárka.

"No, my old woman is sweeter," cried the Cossack, kissing the struggling woman.

"He will choke me to death!" she cried, laughing.

The even tramp of steps at the end of the street interrupted the laughter. Three soldiers, in overcoats, with guns across their shoulders, were keeping step, as they walked to relieve the guard at the company's chest.

The corporal, an old bachelor, looked angrily at the Cossacks, and led the soldiers in such a way that Lukáshka and Nazárka, who were standing in the road, should be obliged to step aside. Nazárka moved away, but Lukáshka only blinked and turned his head and broad back, and did not stir.

"People are standing here, so you walk around," he said, looking askance, and contemptuously shaking his head to the soldiers.

The soldiers passed by in silence, keeping step in the dusty road.

Maryánka laughed, and so did all the girls after her.

"What gallant lads!" said Nazárka. "Just like long-skirted chanters!" And he marched down the street, in order to mock them.

They all burst out laughing again.

Lukáshka slowly walked up to Maryánka.

"Where is your officer stationed?" he asked.

Maryánka thought awhile.

"We gave them the new cabin," she said.

"Is he old or young?" asked Lukáshka, sitting down near her.

"Do you suppose I have asked him?" answered the girl. "I went to fetch some red wine for him, and saw him through the window with Uncle Eróshka, — he is a red-haired fellow. They have brought a whole cartload of things."

And she lowered her eyes.

"I am so glad that I had a chance to get leave of absence from the cordon!" said Lukáshka, moving up nearer to the girl on the mound, and all the time watching her eyes.

"Well, how long are you going to stay?" asked Maryánka, slightly smiling.

"Till to-morrow morning. Give me some seeds!" he added, stretching out his hand.

Maryánka was all smiles, and opened the collar of her shirt.

"Don't take them all," she said.

"Truly, I was very lonely without you, upon my word," Lukáshka said, calmly, in a quiet whisper, taking the seeds out of the bosom of the girl's shirt; and, bending still closer to her, he began to tell her something in a whisper, with smiling eyes.

"I won't come, that's all," Maryánka suddenly exclaimed, turning away from him.

"Truly — I wanted to tell you something," whispered Lukáshka. "Upon my word! Do come, Maryánka!"

Maryánka shook her head in refusal, but smiling.

"Sister Maryánka! O sister! Mother is calling you to supper," cried Maryánka's little brother, running up to the women.

"I'll be there in a minute," answered the girl. "Go, my dear, go by yourself! I am coming."

Lukáshka rose and raised his hat.

"I guess I had better go home myself," he said, pretending to be indifferent, but with difficulty repressing a smile. He disappeared around the corner of the house.

In the meantime, night had entirely descended upon the village. The bright stars were gleaming in the dark heaven. The streets were dark and deserted. Nazárka remained with the women on the mound, and their laughter could be heard; but Lukáshka, having softly walked away from the girls, crouched like a cat, and suddenly, holding his dangling dagger, began to run, noiselessly, not to his house, but in the direction of the ensign's cabin. Having run along two streets and turned into a lane, he lifted his mantle and seated himself on the ground in the shadow of a fence.

"Just look at the ensign's daughter!" he thought of Maryánka. "She will not have any fun, the devil! My time will come."

The steps of an approaching woman distracted his thoughts. He began to listen and to smile to himself. Maryánka, with drooping head, was walking with rapid and even steps straight toward him, striking with a stick against the pickets of a fence. Lukáshka rose a little. Maryánka was startled, and stopped.

"Accursed devil! You have frightened me. You did not go home," she said, laughing loud.

Lukáshka embraced the girl with one hand, and with the other he touched her face.

"I wanted to tell you — upon my word!" his voice was quivering and broken.

"What talk have you found for the night?" answered Maryánka. "Mother is waiting for me, and you had better go to your mistress."

Having freed herself from his arms, she ran a few steps ahead. When she reached the fence of her yard, she stopped and turned to the Cossack who was running by her side, still persuading her to stay an hour with him.

"Well, what is it you wanted to say, you night-bird?" and she laughed again.

"Do not make fun of me, Maryánka! Upon my word! What if I have a mistress? The devil take her! You just say the word, and I will love you so! I will do anything you want me to. Do you hear?" (He jingled the money in his pocket.) "Now we will have a fine time. Other people are enjoying themselves, but how about me? I get no pleasure from you, Maryánushka!"

The girl did not reply. She stood before him, and, with the rapid motion of her fingers, broke the stick into small pieces.

Lukáshka suddenly clinched his fists and set his teeth.

"Why should I be waiting all the time? Do I not love you, my dear? Do anything you please with me!" he suddenly said, frowning angrily, and seizing both her hands.

Maryánka did not change the calm expression of her countenance and voice.

"Don't be so bold, Lukáshka, but listen to me!" she answered, without tearing her hands away, but pushing him aside. "Of course, I am a girl, but you listen to me! I cannot do as I please, but if you love me, I will tell you something. You let my hands go, and I will tell you. I

will marry you, but you will not live to see me do foolish things," said Maryánka, without turning her face away.

"As to marrying, — it is not in my power. Maryánka, I want you to love me," said Lukáshka, suddenly changing his gloomy and ferocious manner to one of gentleness, submission, and tenderness. He smiled, and looked her straight in the eyes.

Maryánka pressed close to him and gave him a smacking kiss on his lips.

"My darling!" she whispered, passionately embracing him. Then, suddenly tearing herself away, she ran, and, without turning around, walked through the gate of her house.

Maryánka did not stop, in spite of the Cossack's request to wait another minute, and to hear what he had to say.

"Go on! They will see us!" she said. "Look there, I think I see the devil of a lodger walking in the yard."

"The ensign's daughter," Lukáshka thought to himself, "will marry me! Marrying is all right, but you love me!"

He found Nazárka at Yámka's. After celebrating together, he went to Dunáyka and, in spite of her infidelity, remained there over night.

XIV.

Olénin was actually in the yard when Maryánka came in through the gate, and he heard her say, "The devil of a lodger is walking." All that evening he had passed with Uncle Eróshka on the porch of his new lodging. He had ordered a table, a samovár, wine, a burning candle to be brought out, and, while drinking his tea and smoking a cigar, he listened to the stories of the old man, who was seated at his feet on the steps.

Though the air was calm, the candle guttered, and the light flickered in all directions, illuminating now the post of the porch, now the table and dishes, now the white clipped head of the old man. Night-moths flitted about and, shedding the dust from their wings, dashed against the table and the glasses, or flew into the candle-light, or disappeared in the darkness of the air, beyond the illuminated circle.

Olénin and Eróshka emptied together five bottles of red wine. Eróshka always filled the glasses, and, giving one to Olénin, drank to his health, and talked without cessation. He told him about the former life of the Cossacks, about his father, "The Broad," who used to carry on his shoulders a boar's carcass weighing four hundred pounds, and to drink two buckets of wine at one sitting. He told of his own young days, and of his friend Girchík, with whom he used to haul felt mantles across the Térek, during the black plague. He told him of one of his hunts when he killed two stags in one morning. He told him of his mistress who used to run after him at night to

the cordon. And he told all this so eloquently and picturesquely that Olénin did not notice how the time was passing.

"That's the way it is, my father," he said. "You did not know me during my golden time, or I would have shown you everything. To-day Eróshka has licked the pitcher, but formerly Eróshka's fame thundered through the army. Who had the best horse? Who had a Gurdá sabre? To whom did they go to get a drink, or have a spree? Who was sent into the mountains to kill Akhmét-khan? Always Eróshka! Whom did the girls love? Always Eróshka, because I was a genuine brave. I was a toper and thief, and used to steal the herds in the mountains, and I was a singer, too: I could do anything. There are no such Cossacks nowadays. It makes you feel bad to look at them. They are no taller than this" (Eróshka pointed to about three feet from the ground) "when they put on some stupid boots, and do nothing but look at them in glee. Or they puff themselves up with wine; and they do not drink like men, but God knows how. And who was I? I was Eróshka the thief; I was known not only in the villages, but in the mountains as well. I had chums among princes. I was friendly with everybody. Whether Tartar, or Armenian, or soldier, or officer, — it was all the same to me, so long as he was a tippler. 'You,' he says, 'must cleanse yourself from foul contact: do not drink with the soldiers, do not eat with the Tartars!'"

"Who says that?" asked Olénin.

"Our chanters say so. But just listen to a Tartar mullah or kadi. He says, 'You infidel Giaours, why do you eat pork?' So everybody keeps his own law. But, in my opinion, it is all one. God has made everything for man to enjoy. There is no sin in anything. Take an example from a wild animal. He lives in the Tartar reeds as well as in ours. Wherever he goes is his home.

What God has given him, he devours. And ours say that we shall have to lick the frying-pans for that? But I think it is all false," he added, after a silence.

"What is false?" asked Olénin.

"What the chanters say. In Chérvlenaya, my father, the army elder was a chum of mine. He was a fine fellow, just like me. They killed him in the Chechnyá country. He used to say that the chanters got that all out of their own heads. 'You give up the ghost,' he would say, 'and the grass will grow out on your little mound, and that is all.'" The old man laughed. "He was a desperate fellow."

"How old are you?" asked Olénin.

"God knows! Seventy or more. When you had a Tsarítsa, I was a grown-up lad. So figure out how much it is! Will that make seventy?"

"Yes. But you are still a fine fellow."

"Well, thank the Lord, I am well, entirely well; only a hag of a woman has ruined me —"

"How so?"

"Just ruined me —"

"When you die, will the grass grow over you?" Olénin repeated his words.

Eróshka evidently did not wish to elucidate his meaning. He kept silent for a moment.

"And what did you think? Drink!" he cried, smiling, and giving him a glass of wine.

XV.

"So, what was I saying?" he continued, trying to collect his thoughts. "That's the kind of man I am! I am a hunter. There is no other hunter in the whole army to match me. I will find and show to you every kind of animal, and every kind of bird; I know where everything is. I have dogs, and two guns, and nets, and a snare, and a hawk, — I have everything, thank God! If you are a genuine hunter, and not given to boasting, I will show you everything. This is what I am! If I find a track, I at once know what animal it belongs to; and I know where it lies down, and where it comes to drink, or to wallow. I sit the whole night on a scaffolding and watch, — what's the use of staying at home! I would only commit a sin, and puff myself up with drink. And the women come around and prattle, and the children scream: it is enough to make one crazy. So I go out at twilight, choose a nice place, press down the reeds, and sit down, good fellow that I am, and wait for things to happen. I know everything that is going on in the woods. I look at the sky, and see the stars moving; and I look at them to find out the time. I look around, — the forest is rustling, and I am waiting for something to crash, and for a wild boar to come to his wallow. I hear the squeaking of young eagles, and the noises of the cocks and geese in the village. If it is the geese, — it is not midnight yet. And I know all that. And if I hear the report of a gun somewhere in the distance, I think who has been shooting. Is it a Cossack

who has been lying in wait for an animal, just as I am lying? And has he killed him, or has he only wounded him, and will the beast go through the reeds, leaving a track of blood, without being found? I do not like that! Oh, I do not like that! Why has he ruined an animal? Fool! Fool! Or I think, 'Maybe an abrék has killed some silly young Cossack!' All that passes through my mind. Once I was sitting near the water, and I saw a cradle carried down the river. It was in good condition, only the edge was broken off. Then the thought came to me, whose cradle it was. And I thought your devilish soldiers must have gone to some native village, where they raped the Chechén women, and one devil grabbed a baby by the legs, and banged it against the corner of the house. Don't they do such things? Oh, some people have no souls! And then all kinds of thoughts came to me, and I felt sorry for them. It occurred to me that they might have thrown away the cradle, and driven the woman off, and burnt the house, and that the Chechén brave picked up his musket and went out ravaging on our side. And so I sit and think. And when I hear a herd in the thicket, my heart goes pit-a-pat. Come up, dear ones! And I am afraid they will scent me, and I sit without stirring, and my heart is in a flutter, and it almost lifts me up bodily. Last spring a fine herd came up, and it looked black. 'To the Father and the Son — ' and I was about to shoot. Then she grunted at her young ones, as much as to say, 'Look out, children, a man is sitting there,' and they crashed through the brush. And there she had been so close to me that I almost could have bitten into her."

"How did the sow tell her young ones that a man was sitting there?" asked Olénin.

"What did you think? Did you think that the beasts are stupid? No, they are more intelligent than man, even though it be a boar. They know everything. Let

us take this example: a man walks along an animal's trail and does not notice it, but when a boar strikes your trail, he scents you at once, and off he makes; evidently he has sense enough to discover your scent while you cannot even perceive your own. And why not? You want to kill him, but he wants to disport himself in the woods. You have your law, and he has his. He is a boar, but he is not worse than you; he is God's creature, too. Pshaw! Man is stupid, stupid, stupid!" The old man repeated these words several times, and, lowering his head, fell to musing.

Olénin, too, was pensive, and, walking down the steps, silently paced the yard, with his arms behind his back.

When Eróshka awoke from his reverie, he raised his head and began to gaze steadily at the night-moths which were circling around the quivering candle-light and falling into it.

"Fool! Fool!" he said. "Whither do you fly? Fool! Fool!" He raised himself and began to drive off the moths with his stout fingers.

"You will burn yourself, little fool! Fly thither, here is room enough," he uttered, in a tender voice, trying carefully to catch it by its wings with his stout fingers, and to liberate it again. "You are destroying yourself, and I am sorry for you."

He remained sitting for a long time, and drinking from the bottle. But Olénin continued to pace the yard. Suddenly he was attracted by a whisper on the other side of the gate. Involuntarily holding his breath, he could make out a woman's laugh, a man's voice, and the sound of a kiss. He purposely shuffled his feet on the grass, and walked over to the other side of the yard. But a little while later the wicker fence creaked. A Cossack, in a dark mantle and white lambskin cap (it was Lukáshka), walked along the fence, and a tall woman in a white kerchief passed by Olénin.

"I have nothing to do with you, and you nothing with me," Maryánka's firm gait seemed to say. He followed her with his eyes up to the steps of the cabin, and saw her through the window taking off her kerchief and sitting down on a bench. And suddenly the feeling of pining, of indistinct desires and hopes, and of a certain envy toward some one took possession of the young man's soul.

The last lights in the cabins were extinguished. The last sounds died down in the village. And the wicker fences, and the white cattle in the yards, and the thatches of the houses, and the slender poplars, — everything seemed to sleep a healthy, tranquil sleep after its hard labours. Only the uninterrupted dinning of the frogs reached the intent ear from the moist places in the distance. The stars were less abundant in the east, and seemed to melt away in the growing light. Overhead they receded farther and farther, and became ever more abundant.

The old man had fallen asleep, leaning on his arm. A cock crowed in the yard across the street. But Olénin continued to walk, lost in thought. He walked up to the fence and began to listen. Some young Cossacks were tuning a merry song, and above them rose especially one shrill, youthful voice.

"Do you know who it is that is singing there?" said the old man, upon awaking. "It is Lukáshka the Brave. He has killed a Chechén, and so he is celebrating. And what is he rejoicing over, fool?"

"Have you killed any people?" asked Olénin.

The old man suddenly raised himself on both elbows and moved his face close to Olénin's.

"Devil!" he cried to him. "Why do you ask? One must not speak of this. It is a very clever thing to kill a man. Oh, so clever! Good-bye, my father, I have had enough to eat and to drink," he said, rising. "Shall I come to-morrow to take you out hunting?"

"Do come!"

"Be sure and get up early, or there will be a fine."

"Don't be afraid! I will get up before you," answered Olénin.

The old man went away. The song was finished. Footsteps and merry talking could be heard. A little later the singing began once more, but farther away, and Eróshka's loud voice joined the former voices.

"What people! What a life!" thought Olénin, sighing, and alone returned to his room.

XVI.

Uncle Eróshka was a lonely Cossack, out of service. His wife had become an Orthodox Christian twenty years before, and, having run away from him, had married a Russian sergeant. He had no children. It was not an idle boast, when he said that he had been the bravest man in the village. He had been known throughout the army for his old-fashioned deeds of bravery. He had upon his conscience more than one murder of Chechéns and Russians. He used to go to the mountains, had stolen from the Russians, and had been twice in jail. The greater part of his life he passed in hunting and in the forest, where, for days at a time, he ate nothing but a piece of bread, and drank nothing but water. But when he returned to the village, he went on a spree from the morning to the evening.

After returning home from Olénin he went to sleep for about two hours. He awoke long before daybreak, and lay on his bed and tried to form an opinion of the man whose acquaintance he had made the evening before. He was very much pleased with Olénin's *simplicity* (which simplicity consisted in letting him have all the wine he wanted). And he was pleased with Olénin himself. He was wondering why all the Russians were *simple* and rich, and why they knew nothing, and yet were learned men. He was meditating over these questions, and also considering what to ask of Olénin.

Uncle Eróshka's cabin was quite large and not old;

but the absence of a woman was visible in everything. In spite of the usual care which the Cossacks bestow upon their house, his best room was filthy and in the greatest disorder. On the table were thrown his blood-stained coat, one half of a milk cake, and next to it a plucked and dismembered jackdaw to feed his hawk with. On the benches lay scattered his buckskin shoes, a gun, a dagger, a pouch, wet clothes, and rags. In the corner, in a tub of dirty, ill-smelling water, another pair of buckskins was soaking. On the floor were flung a net and a few dead pheasants; and near the table promenaded a chicken with one of its legs fettered, and tapping on the dirty floor. In the cold oven stood a clay pot filled with some kind of a milky liquid. On the oven screamed a falcon, which tried to tear itself away from its cord, and a moulting hawk sat solemnly on the edge, looking askance at the chicken, and now and then bending its head from right to left. Uncle Eróshka himself lay on his back on a bed which had been built in between the oven and the wall; he wore nothing but a shirt, and, resting his muscular legs on the oven, was picking with his stout fingers the scabs on his hands which had been scratched up by the hawk, for he was in the habit of handling him without gloves. The air of the whole room, but especially in the neighbourhood of the old man, was saturated by that strong but disagreeable and mixed odour which always accompanied him.

"*Uyde-ma*" (that is, at home), "uncle?" He heard in the window a shrill voice which he at once recognized as belonging to his neighbour Lukáshka.

"*Uyde, uyde, uyde!* At home, come in!" cried the old man. "Neighbour Márka, Luká Márka, what brings you to uncle? Are you going back to the cordon?"

The hawk was startled by his master's voice, and flapped its wings, tugging at its fetters.

The old man was fond of Lukáshka, and he excluded

him alone from the contempt which he felt for the whole young generation of Cossacks. Besides, Lukáshka and his mother, being his neighbours, frequently gave him wine, boiled cream, and other domestic products, which Eróshka did not possess. Uncle Eróshka, who was all his life carried away by one thing or another, always gave a practical explanation to his impulses: "Well? They are people of means," he said to himself. "I will bring them some venison or a hen, and they will not forget uncle: they will bring him a pie or cakes now and then."

"Good morning, Márka! I am glad to see you," the old man cried, merrily, and, with a rapid motion throwing down his bare legs from the bed, jumped up, made two or three steps over the creaking floor, looked at his bandy legs, and suddenly found them very funny; he smiled, gave one stamp with his bare heel, and then a second stamp, and struck an attitude.

"Did I do it smartly?" he asked, his small eyes sparkling with delight.

Lukáshka barely smiled.

"Are you going back to the cordon?" the old man asked.

"I have brought you some red wine which I had promised you at the cordon."

"Christ save you!" said the old man; he picked up his wide trousers and half-coat, put them on, girded himself with a strap, poured some water from a clay pot on his hands, wiped them against some old trousers, with a piece of a comb straightened out his beard, and stood up in front of Lukáshka. "I am ready," he said.

Lukáshka took a wine-glass, wiped it, filled it with wine, and, sitting down on a bench, offered it to the old man.

"To your health! To the Father and the Son!" said the old man, with solemnity receiving the wine. "May all

your wishes be fulfilled! May you be a brave, and earn a cross!"

Lukáshka, too, uttered a prayer, drank his wine, and put the glass on the table. The old man rose, brought a dried fish, put it on the threshold, broke it with a stick, so as to soften it, and, laying it with his shrivelled hands on his one blue plate, placed it on the table.

"I have everything, even a lunch, thank God!" he said, proudly. "Well, how is it with Mosév?" the old man asked.

Lukáshka told him how the under-officer had taken away his gun, apparently trying to get the old man's opinion of the matter.

"Don't stand out for the gun," said the old man. "If you will not give the gun, you will not get a reward."

"But, uncle! What reward can there be for an unmounted Cossack? And it was a fine gun, a Crimean one, and it is worth eighty roubles."

"Oh, let it go! I once had a quarrel with the captain: he wanted my horse. 'Give me your horse,' he said, 'and I will recommend you for an ensign.' I did not give it to him, and so nothing came of it."

"But here, uncle! I shall have to buy a horse, and they say I can't get one across the river for less than fifty roubles. Mother has not yet sold her wine."

"Ah, we did not worry about such matters!" said the old man. "When Uncle Eróshka was of your age, he stole whole herds from the Nogáys, and drove them across the Térek. Many a time I swapped a first-class horse for a bottle of brandy or for a felt mantle."

"Why did you give it so cheap?" said Lukáshka.

"Fool, fool, Márka!" the old man said, contemptuously. "How could it be otherwise? That is what you are stealing for, — not to be stingy. I suppose you people have not even seen how horses are driven. Why don't you talk?"

"What shall I say, uncle?" said Lukáshka. "We are evidently a different lot."

"Fool, fool, Márka! A different lot!" answered the old man, mocking the young Cossack. "At your age I was no such Cossack."

"How was it?" asked Lukáshka.

The old man contemptuously shook his head.

"Uncle Eróshka was simple, he was not stingy. And so the whole Chechnyá were my friends. If a chum of mine came to see me, I filled him full of brandy, calmed him down, and put him to bed with me; and whenever I called on him I took some candy to him for a present. That is the way people used to act, and not as now; the only amusement young chaps have is to crack seeds, and spit out the shells," the old man concluded, contemptuously, imitating the way the Cossacks of the present time crack seeds and spit out the shells.

"I know that," said Lukáshka. "It is so!"

"If you want to be a fine fellow, you must be a brave, and not a peasant. And it is only a peasant that buys a horse by counting out the money, and taking the horse for it."

They were silent.

"But it is dull without a horse, uncle, both in the village and at the cordon; and you can't go anywhere to have some fun. They are all such timid people. Even Nazárka. The other day we were in the native village; Giréy-khan wanted us to go with him into the Nogáy country for horses, but no one would go; how could I go myself?"

"And what about uncle? Do you think I am dried up? No, I am not. Give me a horse, and I will go at once into the Nogáy country."

"What is the use of wasting words?" said Lukáshka. "You tell me whether I may trust Giréy-khan? He says, 'Just take the horses as far as the Térek, and there

I will find a place for them, even if there be a whole drove.' He is one of those that shave their heads, so I do not know whether I can believe him."

"You may believe Giréy-khan. His whole family are good people; his father was a trusty friend. Only take your uncle's advice, for I will not advise you badly: make him take an oath, then it will be all right. And when you go with him, always have your pistol ready, particularly when you divide the horses. Once I came very near being killed by a Chechén, when I asked him ten roubles for a horse. You may believe him, but do not lie down without a gun."

Lukáshka listened attentively to the old man.

"Uncle, I have heard them say that you have the burst-grass," he said, after a moment's silence.

"I have not the burst-grass, but I will teach you how to get it: you are a good fellow, and you never forget the uncle. Shall I teach you?"

"Yes, uncle."

"You know the turtle? Well, she is a devil, the turtle is!"

"Of course I know!"

"Find her nest, and make a little wattled fence around it, so that she cannot get through. So she will come, will circle around, and go back again; she will find the burst-grass, will bring it, and break the fence with it. You get there early in the morning, and watch: where it is broken, there lies the burst-grass. Pick it up, and take it wherever you please. There will be no lock and no wall against you!"

"Have you tried it, uncle?"

"No, I have not, but good people have told me of it. I only had an incantation. I used to say the 'Hail to Thee,' whenever I mounted my horse. No one ever killed me."

"What is that 'Hail to Thee,' uncle?"

"Don't you know it? What a people! That's right, ask uncle for it. Listen! Say after me:

"'Hail to Thee, who art living in Zion.
He is your King.
We will mount the horse.
Sophonius weeps.
Zacharias speaks.
Father Pilgrim
Lover-over of men.'

"Lover-over of men," repeated the old man. "Do you know it? Tell it!"

Lukáshka laughed.

"Well, uncle, is this why you were not killed? Maybe."

"You are getting too clever. You learn it, and repeat it. It will do you no harm. When you sing the 'Pilgrim,' you are all right," and the old man laughed himself. "Still, Lukáshka, don't go to the Nogáy country, that's what I tell you!"

"Why not?"

"This is not the time, and you are not the people for it. You Cossacks have turned into a dungheap. And then there are such a lot of Russians here! They will put you in jail. Truly, give it up. You are not the people for it! Now, Girchík and I —"

And the old man began to tell his endless stories.

But Lukáshka looked out of the window.

"It is daylight now, uncle," he interrupted him. "It is time for me to go; come and see us sometime."

"Christ save you! I will go to the officer; I have promised to take him out hunting. He seems to be a good man."

XVII.

From Eróshka's Lukáshka went home. As he was going back, a damp mist had risen from the ground and shrouded the village. The cattle could not be seen, but were heard stirring in all directions. The cocks called each other more frequently and more noisily. The air grew more transparent, and people were getting up. Coming close to his home, Lukáshka made out the fence, wet from the mist, the porch of the cabin, and the open stall. In the yard the sound of wood-chopping could be heard though the mist. Lukáshka walked into the cabin. His mother was up and, standing in front of the oven, was throwing some billets of wood into it. His young sister was still asleep on the bed.

"Well, Lukáshka, have you had your spree?" his mother asked, quietly. "Where were you last night?"

"In the village," her son answered, unwillingly, getting his musket out of the case, and examining it.

His mother shook her head.

Having put some powder on the pan, Lukáshka took down the pouch, drew from it several empty shells, and began to fill the cartridges, carefully closing them up with a small bullet wrapped in a rag. He pulled out the filled cartridges with his teeth, and examined them, and then put away the pouch.

"Well, mother, I told you to fix the bags. Have you mended them?" he said.

"Of course! The dumb girl mended them last night. Is it time for you to go back to the cordon? I have not had a chance to see you."

"The moment I am all ready, I have to go," replied Lukáshka, tying up the powder-bag. "Where is the dumb girl? Has she gone out?"

"I think she is splitting wood. She has been worrying about you all the time. 'I shall not see him,' she said. She pointed with her hand to her face, and clicked and pressed her heart with her hand, as much as to say, 'It is a pity.' Shall I call her? She has understood all about the abrék."

"Call her," said Lukáshka. "I had somewhere some lard, bring it to me. I must grease my sabre."

The old woman went out, and a few minutes later Lukáshka's dumb sister walked over the creaking steps into the room. She was six years older than her brother, and would have resembled him remarkably, but for the dull and coarsely changeable expression of the face, which is common to all the deaf and dumb. Her attire consisted of a coarse shirt in patches; her feet were bare and dirty; on her head she wore a blue kerchief. Her neck, arms, and face were as muscular as a peasant's. It was evident from her garb, and from everything, that she always did a hard man's labour. She brought in an armful of wood which she threw down near the oven. Then she walked up to her brother, with a happy smile, which wrinkled up her whole face, touched him by the shoulder, and began to make rapid signs to him with her hands, her face, and her whole body.

"Well done, well done! A fine girl, Stépka!" replied her brother, shaking his head. "You have fixed everything, and mended it, you are a fine girl! Here is something for it!" He took out of his pocket two honey-cakes, and gave them to her.

The dumb girl blushed, and made a wild noise, to express her joy. She took the cakes, and began more rapidly still to make the signs, pointing often in one direction, and passing her stout finger over her brow and

face. Lukáshka understood her, and nodded, smiling softly. She was telling him that her brother ought to have treated the girls, and that the girls liked him, and that the girl Maryánka was better than any of them, and that she loved him. She indicated Maryánka by pointing rapidly in the direction of her yard, and to her brows and face, smacking her lips, and shaking her head. "She loves you," she said by pressing her hand to her breast, kissing her hand, and as though hugging something. The mother returned to the room, and when she saw what the dumb girl was saying she smiled and shook her head. The dumb girl showed her the honey-cakes, and again shouted for joy.

"I told Ulítka the other day that I would send a go-between," said the mother. "She received my remarks kindly."

Lukáshka looked silently at his mother.

"But, mother, you must take down the wine! I need a horse."

"I will take it down when I have time. I will fix the casks," said the mother, obviously not wishing to have her son meddle with domestic affairs. "When you go," said the old woman to her son, "take along the bag in the vestibule. I have borrowed from people to let you have something at the cordon. Or shall I put it in the saddle-bag?"

"Very well," replied Lukáshka. "If Giréy-khan from across the river comes to see me, send him to the cordon, for they won't let me off for quite awhile. I have some business with him."

He was getting ready.

"I will send him, Lukáshka, I will. So you have been celebrating at Yámka's, I suppose?" said the old woman. "When I got up in the night to attend to the cattle, I thought I heard your voice singing."

Lukáshka did not reply. He walked out into the

vestibule, slung the bags across his shoulder, tucked up his coat, picked up the gun, and stopped on the threshold.

"Good-bye, mother!" he said to her, closing the gate after him. "Send me a keg with Nazárka. I have promised the boys; he will come to see you."

"Christ save you, Lukáshka! God be with you! I will send you, from the new cask," answered the old woman, walking up to the fence. "Listen to what I have to say," she added, bending over the fence.

The Cossack stopped.

"You have been celebrating here! Well, God be praised! Why is a young man not to have a good time? Well, God has granted you a piece of good luck. But, down there, look out, my son, don't do it — Keep on the good side of the officer! You must not do otherwise! I will sell the wine, and will save the money for the horse, and will get you the girl in marriage."

"Very well, very well!" said the son, frowning.

The dumb girl shouted to attract his attention. She pointed to her head and hand, which meant, "A shaven head, — a Chechén." Then, frowning, she did as though she aimed with a gun, cried out, or rather crowed, shaking her head. She was telling Lukáshka to kill another Chechén.

Lukáshka understood her. He smiled, and with light steps, holding the gun on his back, below the felt mantle, disappeared in the dense mist.

The old woman stood awhile silently at the gate, then returned to the hut, and at once went to work.

XVIII.

Lukáshka went to the cordon. At the same time Uncle Eróshka whistled to his dogs, and, climbing across the fence, went by back ways to Olénin's lodging. He did not like to meet women when he went out hunting. Olénin was still asleep, and Vanyúsha, who was awake, but not yet up, was considering whether it was time or not, when Eróshka, with gun on his back, and in complete hunter's trappings, opened the door.

"Switches!" he cried, in his bass voice. "To arms! The Chechéns have come! Iván! Get the samovár ready for your master! You, too, get up! Lively!" cried the old man. "That's the way with us, my good man! See, the girls are all up! Look through the window, look! She is going for water, and you are still asleep."

Olénin awoke, and leaped up. And how refreshed and merry he felt at the sight of the old man, and at the sound of his voice!

"Lively! Lively, Vanyúsha!" he shouted.

"That is the way you go out hunting! People are getting their breakfast, and you are asleep. Lyam! Come here!" he called to his dog.

"Is your gun ready?" he shouted, as though there were a whole crowd in the room.

"Well, I am guilty, but what is to be done? Powder, Vanyúsha! And the wads!" said Olénin.

"The fine!" cried the old man.

"*Du té voulez-vous?*" said Vanyúsha, grinning.

"You are not one of us! You are not talking in our language, you devil!" the old man cried to him, showing the roots of his teeth.

"A first offence is generally forgiven," joked Olénin, pulling on his big boots.

"The first offence is forgiven," answered Eróshka, "but if you sleep late the next time, your fine will be a bucket of red wine. When it gets warmer, you can't find the stags."

"But even if we find them, they are more intelligent than we," said Olénin, repeating the old man's words which he had said the evening before. "You cannot cheat them."

"Laugh all you please! First kill one, and then talk. Come, now, lively! Look there, your landlord is coming to see you," said Eróshka, looking out of the window. "Just see how he is dressed up! He has put on a new coat so as to let you know that he is an officer. Oh, what a people! What a people!"

And indeed, Vanyúsha announced to the master that the landlord wanted to see him.

"*L'argent*," he said, significantly, to prepare his master for the meaning of the ensign's visit. He was soon followed by the ensign himself, who entered the room swaggering, and with a smile on his face, and wished Olénin a pleasant Sunday. He wore a new mantle, with the shoulder-straps of an officer, and polished boots, which is a rarity among Cossacks.

The ensign, Ilyá Vasílevich, was an educated Cossack, who had been in Russia, and was a school teacher; but above all he was noble. He wanted to appear noble, but under the monstrous veneer of his glibness, self-confidence, and preposterous speech one could not help perceiving the same Uncle Eróshka. This was also evident from his sunburnt face, from his hands, and red nose. Olénin invited him to sit down.

"Good morning, Father Ilyá Vasílevich!" said Eróshka, arising, and, as Olénin thought, making an ironically low bow.

"Good morning, uncle! Are you already here?" replied the ensign, carelessly nodding his head to him.

The ensign was a man of about forty years of age, with a gray, wedge-shaped beard, lean, slender, and handsome, and still very well preserved for his forty years. When he came to see Olénin, he was obviously afraid lest he should be taken for a common Cossack, so he wanted to make him feel his importance right away.

"This is our Egyptian Nimrod," he said, turning with a self-satisfied smile to Olénin, and pointing to the old man. "A hunter before the Lord. He is a great hand at everything. Have you made his acquaintance already?"

Uncle Eróshka, looking at his feet, which were wrapped in wet buckskins, thoughtfully shook his head, as though wondering at the ensign's glibness and learning, and mumbled to himself, "Gyptian Nimbrod! What a name!"

"Yes, we want to go hunting," said Olénin.

"That is right," remarked the ensign, "but I have a little business with you."

"What is it you wish?"

"Whereas you be a nobleman," began the ensign, "and whereas I am able to understand myself as also having the rank of an officer, and we consequently may treat each other as of equal rank, just as with all noblemen" (he stopped, and with a smile glanced upon the old man and upon Olénin) — "But if you should have the desire, in accordance with my agreement, for my wife being a foolish woman, in our condition of life, she could not in the present time completely grasp your words of yesterday's date. And thus my lodgings might have gone to the adjutant of the regiment for six roubles, without the stable, and, as being a nobleman, I can always remove one for gratis. And whereas you should wish, I, being

myself of the rank an officer, can personally come to an agreement with you, and as an inhabitant of this country, not as is the habit, I am able to comply with all the points of the agreement — "

"He talks clearly," mumbled the old man.

The ensign talked long in the same strain. Of this, all Olénin was able to make out, not without great difficulty, was that the ensign wanted to get six roubles a month for his quarters. He gladly complied with his wish, and offered his guest a glass of tea. The ensign declined it.

"According to our foolish custom," he said, "we regard it almost a sin to use a general glass. Though, in accordance with my education, I might understand it; my wife, in her human weakness — "

"Well, will you have a glass of tea?"

"If you will permit me, I will bring my own glass, my special glass," answered the ensign, and walked out on the porch. "Fetch me a glass!" he shouted.

A few minutes later the door opened, and a young sunburnt hand, in a rose-coloured sleeve, holding a glass, was stretched out through the door. The ensign walked up, took the glass, and said something in a whisper to his daughter. Olénin filled the special glass for the ensign, and a general glass for Eróshka.

"However, I do not wish to keep you," said the ensign, burning his lips in his haste to finish his glass. "I, so to say, have myself a great passion for fishing, and I am here only on vacation, so to say, on a recreation from my duties. I also have a desire to try my luck, and to see whether the 'Gifts of Térek'[1] will not fall to my lot. I hope you will visit me sometime, to drink the 'family' cup, according to our village custom," he added.

The ensign bowed, pressed Olénin's hand, and went out. As Olénin was getting ready to go, he heard the ensign's commanding voice giving orders to the members of his

[1] Poem by Lérmontov.

family. A few minutes later Olénin saw the ensign in trousers rolled up over his knees and in a torn half-coat, with a net across his shoulder, walking past the window.

"The rascal!" said Uncle Eróshka, finishing his tea from the general glass. "Well, will you really pay him six roubles? Who has ever heard the like? You may have the best cabin in the village for two roubles. What a beast! Why, I will let you have mine for three roubles."

"No, I had better remain here," said Olénin.

"Six roubles! It is evidently fool's money you have! Pshaw," said the old man. "Fetch the red wine, Iván!"

Having taken a snack and drunk some brandy for the journey, Olénin and the old man went out into the street, at about eight o'clock.

At the gate they met a cart all hitched up. Maryánka, her head wrapped down to her eyes with a white kerchief, wearing a half-coat over her shirt, in boots, and holding a long switch in her hands, was pulling the oxen by a rope that was attached to their horns.

"Motherkin," said the old man, making a motion as though he wanted to hug her.

Maryánka raised her switch at him, and gave them both a merry glance with her beautiful eyes.

Olénin felt even more cheerful than before.

"Well, come! Come on!" he said, shouldering his gun, and feeling the girl's eyes resting upon him.

"Get up!" Maryánka's voice rang out behind them, and soon after the moving cart was heard to creak.

As long as the road led back of the houses of the village, over pastures, Eróshka kept talking. He could not forget the ensign, and he did not stop abusing him.

"But why are you so angry at him?" asked Olénin.

"He is stingy! I do not like him," answered the old man. "When he dies, everything will be left. For whom is he hoarding? He has put up two buildings. A second

garden he got by a lawsuit from his brother. And he is a great hand at writing documents! They come to him from other villages to get their documents written by him. And as he writes, so it happens. He always strikes it right. For whom is he hoarding? He has but one boy and one girl, and when she is married, there will be nobody left."

"Then he is laying up for the dowry," said Olénin.

"What dowry? They are anxious to get the girl, — she is a fine girl. He is such a devil that he wants to marry her to a rich man. He wants to skin him out of a big marriage gift. Luká is a Cossack; he is a neighbour of mine and my nephew; a fine chap who has killed a Chechén, and they have tried to get her for him, but he will not let him have her. He finds one excuse after another. 'The girl is too young,' he says. But I know what he is thinking about. He wants them to come with gifts. He is acting shamefully about that girl. But Lukáshka will get her in the end, for he is the first Cossack in the village, a brave; he killed an abrék, and they will give him a cross."

"What is that now? As I was walking in the yard last night, I saw my landlady's daughter kissing a Cossack," said Olénin.

"You are bragging," shouted the old man, stopping.

"Upon my word!" said Olénin.

"A woman is a devil," said Eróshka, pensively. "What kind of a Cossack was it?"

"I did not see."

"What was the colour of the hair on his cap? White?"

"Yes."

"And a red coat? About your size?"

"No, a little taller."

"That's he!" Eróshka roared. "That's he, my Márka. I call him Márka for fun. That's he. I love him! I

was just like him, my father. What is the use asking them? My mistress used to sleep with her mother and sister-in-law, but I climbed in all the same. She used to live up-stairs. Her mother was a witch, a devil: she hated me dreadfully. I used to come with my chum, they called him Girchík. I would walk up under the window, climb on his shoulders, raise the window, and grope my way in. She slept on a bench. Once I awakened her. She began to groan, for she did not recognize me. 'Who is there?' But I did not dare answer. Her mother was already stirring. I took off my cap, and gagged her with it: then she recognized me by the border of my cap. She leaped up from her bed. At other times, I did not need any of these stratagems. And she would bring me boiled cream, and grapes, and everything," added Eróshka, who explained everything in a practical manner. "And she was not the only one. It was a fine life I led."

"And now?"

"Let us follow the dog! When a pheasant alights on a tree, shoot!"

"Would you court Maryánka?"

"You watch the dogs! I will tell you about it in the evening," said the old man, pointing to his favourite dog, Lyam.

They grew silent. Having walked about one hundred steps, talking now and then, the old man stopped once more and pointed to a stick that was lying across the path.

"What do you think about it?" he said. "Do you think it is lying right? No, the stick is lying badly."

"What is there bad in it?"

He smiled.

"You do not know anything. Listen to me! When a stick lies like that, you must not step over it, but walk around it, or throw the stick away, and say the prayer, 'To the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost,' and

then you may go with God's aid. It will not hurt you then. Old people used to tell me that."

"What nonsense!" said Olénin. "Tell me rather about Maryánka. Well, so she keeps company with Lukáshka?"

"Sh! Now keep quiet," the old man again interrupted the conversation, in a whisper. "Just listen. We will go around through the forest."

And the old man, stepping inaudibly in his buckskins, walked ahead on a narrow path which entered a dense, wild, overgrown forest. He looked now and then, frowningly, back upon Olénin, who produced a rustling noise and a thud with his big boots, and, carrying his gun carelessly, several times caught in the branches of the trees that hung over the path.

"Don't make any noise! Go more softly, soldier!" he said to him, angrily, in a whisper.

The air felt as though the sun were up. The mist was beginning to disperse, but it still enveloped the tops of the trees. The forest seemed to be terribly high. The view changed at every step forward. What seemed to be a tree, turned out to be a bush; the reeds looked like trees.

XIX.

The mist had lifted, so that the moist reed thatches could be seen, and now was changed into dew that dampened the road and the grass near the fences. The smoke rose in clouds from the chimneys. The people were leaving the village, some to go to their work, others to the river, and others again to the cordon. The hunters walked together over the damp, grass-grown path. The dogs ran, wagging their tails and looking at their master, on both sides of them. Millions of gnats hovered in the air, and pursued the hunters, covering their backs, eyes, and hands. The air was fragrant with grass and the dampness of the woods. Olénin continually looked back at the ox-cart, in which Maryánka sat, urging on the oxen with a stick.

Everything was quiet. The sounds of the village, audible before, no longer reached the hunters; only the dogs crashed through the thorn bushes, and now and then a bird uttered a sound. Olénin knew that the woods were dangerous, that abréks were always concealed in such places. He also knew that for a man on foot a gun was a great protection in the forest. Not that he was afraid, but he felt that any other person would feel afraid; and, looking with strained attention into the misty, damp forest, and listening to the occasional faint sounds, he fingered his gun and experienced a novel and pleasant sensation.

Uncle Eróshka walked ahead and stopped at every

puddle, where there were double tracks of animals; he examined them carefully and showed them to Olénin. He said very little; occasionally he made some remark in a whisper. The road over which they were walking was rutted by cart-wheels, and thickly overgrown with grass. The cork-elm and plane-tree forest on both sides of the road was so dense and so choked with underbrush that it was impossible to look through it. Nearly every tree was thickly overgrown to its top with wild grape-vines; and below, grew thick blackthorn bushes. Every small clearing was overrun with blackberry vines and reeds with their gray, wavy tops. Here and there large animal tracks and small tunnelled trails of pheasants led from the road into the thicket. The rankness of the vegetation in this forest, which had not been tracked by cattle, greatly impressed Olénin at every step he took, for he had never seen anything like it. This forest, the peril, the old man with his mysterious whisper, Maryánka with her strong, stately figure, and the mountains, — all this appeared to Olénin like a dream.

"The dog has treed a pheasant," whispered the old man, looking around, and pulling his cap over his face. "Hide your mug, it is a pheasant!" He angrily waved his hand to Olénin and crept on, almost on his hands and knees. "It does not like a man's mug."

Olénin was some distance behind him, when the old man stopped and began to examine the tree. A cock called from the tree to the dog, which was barking at him, and Olénin noticed the pheasant. But just then a report, like a cannon, rang out from Eróshka's monstrous gun, and the cock flew up, dropping some of his feathers, and fell to the ground. Walking up to the old man, Olénin scared up another. Putting his gun to his shoulder, he aimed and fired. The pheasant circled upwards and then, catching in the branches, fell like a stone into the thicket.

"You are a brick!" cried the old man, who could not shoot a bird on the wing, and smiled.

They picked up the pheasants and went on. Excited by the motion and by the praise, Olénin kept up a conversation with the old man.

"Wait! We will go in this direction," the old man interrupted him. "I saw a deer trail here yesterday."

Having turned into the thicket and gone some three hundred paces, they came to a clearing that was overgrown with reeds, and in places overflowed with water. Olénin kept falling behind the old huntsman, and suddenly Uncle Eróshka crouched, about twenty steps in front of him, excitedly nodding his head and waving his hand. When Olénin came up to him, he saw the track of a man's feet, to which the old man was pointing.

"You see?"

"I do. What of it?" said Olénin, trying to speak as calmly as possible. "It is a man's track."

Involuntarily the thought of Cooper's "Pathfinder" and of abréks flashed through his head, and when he saw the mysterious manner in which the old man walked ahead, he could not make up his mind to ask him any questions, and was in doubt whether it was the peril or the hunt which caused this mystery.

"No, that is my track," the old man answered, simply, and pointed to the grass, underneath which a faint animal track was visible.

The old man went ahead. Olénin did not fall back. Having walked about twenty paces, they went down-hill and came to a spreading pear-tree in a thicket; underneath it the earth was black, and fresh animal dung lay upon it.

The place was all covered with grape-vines, and resembled a covered cosy arbour, dark and cool.

"He has been here this morning," said the old man, sighing. "The lair is still fresh and steaming."

Suddenly a mighty crash was heard in the forest, about ten paces from them. Both of them were startled and grasped their guns, but they could not see anything; they could only hear the breaking of branches. The swift, even thud of a gallop could be heard for a moment; then the crackling passed into a hollow din, farther and farther away, and reëchoing farther and farther through the quiet forest. Olénin felt as though something was breaking in his heart. He gazed in vain into the green thicket, and finally looked at the old man. Uncle Eróshka stood immovable, pressing his gun to his chest; his cap was poised on the back of his head; his eyes were burning with an uncommon brilliancy; and his mouth, showing its well-worn yellow teeth, remained open, as though petrified.

"A horned stag!" he said. He threw his gun down in despair, and began to pull his gray beard. "Here he stood! I ought to have walked up from the path! Fool! Fool!" and he tugged his beard in anger. "Fool! Hog!" he repeated, painfully pulling his beard.

It looked as though something were flying by, above the forest, in the mist. Farther and farther away resounded the gallop of the stag.

Olénin and the old man returned at twilight. He was weary, hungry, and full of strength. The dinner was ready. He ate and drank with the old man, and feeling warm and gay, he walked out on the porch. Again the mountains in the west rose before his eyes. Again the old man told his endless stories about hunting, about abréks, and about mistresses, — about a careless, adventurous life. Again fair Maryánka walked in and out, and crossed the yard. Under her shirt was clearly outlined the powerful, virgin body of the fair maiden.

XX.

On the following day Olénin went without the old man to the place where they had scared up the stag. Instead of going through the gate, he climbed over a hedge of brambles, just as everybody else in the village would do. He had not yet got all the thorns out of his mantle, when his dog, which had run ahead, startled two pheasants. The moment he entered into the buckthorn thicket, pheasants flew up at every step. (The old man had not shown him this place the day before, intending to hunt there with snares.) Olénin killed five pheasants out of twelve shots, and, crawling for them under the thorn bushes, grew so fatigued that the perspiration trickled down his face in streams. He called back his dog, uncocked his gun, put the bullets on the shot, and, warding off the gnats with the sleeves of his mantle, slowly walked toward the place where he had been the day before. It was, however, impossible to keep back the dog, which ran upon trails on the path, and he killed two more pheasants; he lost his time with them, and did not come to the familiar spot before midday.

It was a very clear, quiet, warm day. The morning dampness was dried up even in the forest, and millions of gnats literally covered his face, back, and hands. The black dog looked gray under a covering of gnats. The mantle, through which the gnats thrust their stings, looked just as gray. Olénin wanted to run away from the pests; he even thought that it would be impossible to pass a summer in the village. He started homewards; but con-

sidering that people lived there in spite of the gnats, he determined to suffer, and patiently endured the stings. Strange to say, toward midday the sensation began to be agreeable to him. It even seemed to him that if it were not for that atmosphere of the gnats which surrounded him, and for that paste of gnats, which under his hand was smeared over his whole perspiring face, and for that disquieting burning over his whole body, the forest of that region would lose its character and charm for him. These myriads of insects were so appropriate to this wild, desperately rich vegetation, to this endless mass of beasts and birds that filled the woods, to this green foliage, to this redolent, warm air, to these runlets of muddy water which oozed on all sides from the Térek, and which bubbled somewhere under the overhanging branches, that that which before had appeared to him terrible and unbearable, now gave him pleasure.

Having passed by the spot where on the previous day they had seen the stag, and not meeting anything there, he wanted to take a rest. The sun stood straight over the forest, and its direct rays burnt his back and head every time he walked out on a clearing or into the road. Seven heavy pheasants weighed heavily on the small of his back. He found the stag's tracks of the previous day, crawled under the bush in the thicket where the stag had been lying the day before, and lay down near the lair. He examined the dark foliage all around him, the damp place, the dung of the previous day, the imprint of the stag's knees, a clump of black earth which the stag had kicked up, and his own tracks of the day before. He felt cool and comfortable; he thought of nothing, wished for nothing.

And suddenly he was overcome by such a strange feeling of causeless happiness and love for everything that, following an old boyish habit, he began to cross himself and to thank somebody for something. It suddenly

passed through his mind with extraordinary clearness that he, Dmítri Olénin, a being apart from all other beings, was sitting all alone, God knew where, in the very spot where there used to live a stag, a beautiful old stag which, perhaps, had never before seen a man, and in a place where, perhaps, no one had been sitting before, or thinking about the same matter.

"I am sitting here, and all about me are young and old trees, and one of these is festooned with wild grape-vines; near me pheasants are fluttering, driving each other from their hiding-places, and probably scenting their dead brothers." He put his fingers on his pheasants, examined them, and wiped his hand, which was stained by their warm blood, against his mantle. "The jackals are probably scenting them, and with dissatisfied faces turning away in the opposite direction. The gnats fly all around me, passing by leaves that appear to them like so many huge islands, and they hover in the air and buzz: one, two, three, four, one hundred, one thousand, a million gnats, and all of them buzz something, for some reason, all about me, and every one of them is just such a Dmítri Olénin, apart from all the rest, as I am." He had a clear idea of what the gnats were thinking and buzzing. "Here, boys! Here is one whom we can eat," they buzzed, and clung to him. And it became clear to him that he was not at all a Russian nobleman, a member of Moscow society, a friend and relative of this or that person, but simply just such a gnat, or pheasant, or stag, as those that now were living all around him. "I shall live and die, just like them, like Uncle Eróshka. And he is telling the truth, 'Only grass will grow up!'

"And what of it if the grass will grow up?" he continued his thought. "Still I must live; I must be happy, because I wish but for this — happiness. It matters not what I am: such an animal as the rest, over which the grass will grow, and nothing else, or a frame into which

a part of the One God has been encased, — I must still live the best way possible. But how must I live in order to be happy, and why have I not been happy before?" And he began to recall his former life, and he was disgusted with himself. He represented himself as an exacting egoist, whereas in reality he needed very little for himself. And he kept gazing about him: at the foliage checkered by the sunlight, at the declining sun, and at the clear heaven, and he felt himself as happy as before.

"Why am I happy, and why have I lived before?" he thought. "How exacting I used to be! How I concocted and caused nothing but shame and woe for myself!" And suddenly it seemed that a new world was open to him. "Happiness is this," he said to himself: "happiness consists in living for others. This is clear. The desire for happiness is inborn in man; consequently it is legitimate. In attempting to satisfy it in an egoistical manner, that is, by seeking wealth, glory, comforts of life, and love, the circumstances may so arrange themselves that it is impossible to satisfy these desires. Consequently these desires are illegitimate, but the need of happiness is not illegitimate. Now, what desires are these that can always be satisfied, in spite of external conditions? What desires? Love, self-sacrifice!"

He was so rejoiced and excited when he discovered this truth which seemed to be new, that he leaped up and impatiently began to look around for some one to sacrifice himself for, to do good to, and to love. "I do not need anything for myself," he proceeded in his thought, "then why should I not live for others?"

He picked up his gun and walked out of the thicket, with the intention of returning as soon as possible to the house, where he could consider the matter carefully, and would find a chance to do some good. When he walked out into the clearing, he gazed about him: the sun could no longer be seen above the tree-tops; it was growing

cooler, and the locality seemed to him quite unfamiliar and not like the one which surrounded the village. Everything was suddenly changed, — both the weather, and the character of the forest. The sky was shrouded by clouds; the wind rustled in the tree-tops; all around him could be seen nothing but reeds and old, broken trees. He called his dog, which had run ahead of him in pursuit of some animal, and his voice reëchoed in the wilderness.

And suddenly he felt dreadfully ill at ease. He grew timid. Abréks and murders, of which he had heard, passed through his mind, and he waited for a Chechén to jump out from behind each bush, when he would have to defend his life and die, or like a coward run. He thought of God and of the future life, as he never before had thought of it. And all around him was the same gloomy, severe, wild Nature. "Is it worth while to live for myself," he thought, "when I may die any minute, and die without having done any good, and without any one knowing it?"

He walked in the direction where he supposed the village to be. He no longer thought of his hunt. He experienced mortal fatigue, and with extraordinary attention, almost with terror, watched every bush and tree, expecting any moment to make his account with life. Having wandered about for quite awhile, he came to a runlet, down which flowed the sandy, cold water of the Térek, and, not to lose his way again, he decided to walk along the brook. He walked, without knowing whither it would take him. Suddenly the reeds behind him rustled. He was startled and grasped his gun. He was ashamed of himself when he saw his panting dog rush into the cold water of the runlet and lap it.

He took a drink himself and walked in the direction of the stream, hoping that it would bring him to the village; but, in spite of the companionship of his dog, everything around him appeared to him unusually gloomy.

The forest was growing darker, the wind blew ever stronger through the tops of the old broken trees. Some large birds were shrieking and circling about the nests in these trees. The vegetation grew more scanty; rustling reeds and barren, sandy clearings, tramped down by animal tracks, became more common. To the roar of the wind was added another disagreeable, monotonous roar. He felt altogether melancholy. He put his hand on the pheasants back of him, and he found one missing. The pheasant had broken off and was lost, and only the bloody neck and head remained in the belt. He had never felt so terribly before. He began to pray to God, and he was afraid but of this, that he might die without having done anything good; and he was so anxious to live, to live, in order to commit an act of self-renunciation.

XXI.

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Suddenly his soul became illumined as though by the sun. He heard the sounds of Russian speech, and the swift and even flow of the Térek, and two steps in front of him lay the cinnamon-coloured moving surface of the river, with its dark brown wet sand on the banks and shoals, the distant steppe, the watch-tower of the cordon that stood out above the water, a saddled horse walking hobbled in the buckthorn-bushes, and the mountains. The red sun burst suddenly from behind a cloud, and with its last rays gleamed merrily down the river, over the reeds, on the watch-tower, and on the Cossacks gathered in a group, among whom Lukáshka involuntarily attracted Olénin's attention by his spirited figure.

Olénin again felt, without any apparent cause, quite happy. He had struck the Nízhne-Protók post, on the Térek, opposite the peaceable native village on the other side of the river. He saluted the Cossacks, but finding no chance of doing a good act, walked into the hut. Nor did any chance present itself there. He walked into the clay hut and lighted a cigarette. The Cossacks paid little attention to Olénin, in the first place, because he smoked a cigarette; in the second, because on that evening they had another attraction.

Some hostile Chechéns, relatives of the dead abrék, had come down from the mountains with a spy, to ransom the body. They were waiting for the Cossack authorities to come from the village. The brother of the killed man, a tall, stately fellow, with a clipped beard painted red,

though wearing a mantle and cap that were all tattered and torn, was as self-possessed and majestic as a king. His face resembled that of the dead abrék very closely. He did not bestow a glance upon any one, not once gazed at the dead man, and, squatting in the shade on his heels, smoked his pipe and spit, and occasionally uttered a few guttural sounds of command, to which his companion listened respectfully. It was obvious that he was a brave who had more than once seen the Russians, and under different conditions, and that at the present time nothing among the Russians either surprised or interested him.

Olénin went up to the dead man and began to gaze at him, but the brother, casting a calm, contemptuous, supercilious glance upon Olénin, said something abruptly and angrily. The spy hastened to cover the abrék's face with the dead man's mantle. Olénin was impressed by the majesty and austerity of the brave's face. He said something to him, asking him from what village he was, but the Chechén barely looked at him, spit out contemptuously, and turned away his face. Olénin was so much surprised that the mountaineer was not interested in him, that he explained to himself his indifference as arising from mere stupidity, or from an unfamiliarity with the language. He turned to his companion. His companion, the spy and interpreter, was just as ragged, but his hair was black and not red, and he was very agile, and had extremely white teeth and sparkling black eyes. The spy gladly entered into a conversation, and asked for a cigarette.

"There are five brothers," the spy said, in his broken, half-Russian speech. "The Russians have just killed the third brother, and only two are left: he is a brave, a great brave," said the spy, pointing to the Chechén. "When they killed Akhmét-khan" (that was the name of the dead abrék) "he was sitting in the reeds on the other side of the river; he saw everything, — how they

put him in a skiff, and how they took him to the shore. He stayed there until night; he wanted to kill the old man, but the others would not let him."

Lukáshka walked up to the speakers and sat down.

"From what village are they?" he asked.

"There, in those mountains," answered the spy, pointing beyond the Térek to a bluish mist-covered cleft. "Do you know Suyúk-su? About ten versts beyond it."

"Do you know Giréy-khan in Suyúk-su?" asked Lukáshka, obviously boasting of his friendship. "He is my chum."

"My neighbour," answered the spy.

"A fine fellow!" and Lukáshka, apparently much interested, began to speak in Tartar with the interpreter.

The captain and village elder, with a suite of two Cossacks, all mounted, arrived soon after. The captain, a newly created Cossack officer, saluted the Cossacks; no one answered the salutation with a "We wish you health, well-born sir!" as army soldiers do, but here and there a Cossack answered by a mere nod. Some, and Lukáshka was among their number, rose and stood in a military attitude. The under-officer reported everything in proper condition at the post. All this seemed very ridiculous to Olénin; it looked as though the Cossacks tried to play soldiers. But the formality soon passed into simple relations, and the captain, who was just such an agile Cossack as the rest, carried on a brisk conversation in Tartar with the interpreter. They wrote up a document which they gave to the spy; they took money from him, and went up to the dead body.

"Gavrílov Luká, who is he?" said the captain.

Lukáshka took off his cap and stepped up to him.

"I have sent a report about you to the commander. I do not know what will come of it. I have recommended a cross, — it is too early yet for a sergeancy. Can you read and write?"

"Not at all."

"What a fine-looking fellow you are," said the captain, continuing to play the superior. "Put on your cap! Of what Gavrílovs is he? Of the Broad?"

"His nephew," answered the under-officer.

"I know, I know. Now, come on, give them a lift," he said to the Cossacks.

Lukáshka's face was gleaming with joy, and looked more beautiful than ever. Walking away from the under-officer, and donning his cap, he again seated himself near Olénin.

When the body was carried into the skiff, the brother of the Chechén brave walked down to the shore. The Cossacks involuntarily stepped aside, to make way for him. He pushed off the boat with his powerful foot, and leaped into it. Olénin noticed that he now, for the first time, cast a rapid glance upon all the Cossacks, and again abruptly asked his companion something. His companion answered him and pointed to Lukáshka. The Chechén gazed at him, and, turning slowly away, began to look at the other shore. Not hatred, but cold contempt, was expressed in this glance. He again said something.

"What did he say?" asked Olénin, of the mercurial interpreter.

"You strike ours, we kill yours, — all the same," said the spy, obviously lying. He laughed, displaying his white teeth, and jumped into the skiff.

The brother of the dead man sat immovable, and looked steadily at the other bank. He was so full of hatred and contempt that there could be nothing interesting for him on this side. The spy stood at the end of the skiff, and, transferring his oar from one side to the other, skilfully directed the boat. He was talking without cessation. The skiff cut the current in an oblique direction, and looked ever smaller and smaller. Their voices were scarcely audible, and finally they could be

seen disembarking where their horses were standing. There they carried the body on shore. Though the horse was restless, they placed the body on its saddle, mounted, and slowly rode along the road past the village, from which a crowd of people came out to look at them. The Cossacks on our side were very contented and happy. Everywhere were heard laughter and jokes. The captain and village elder made themselves comfortable in the clay hut. Lukáshka, with happy face, to which he vainly tried to give a staid appearance, sat near Olénin, leaning his elbows on his knees and whittling a stick.

"Why do you smoke?" he said, as though with curiosity. "Is it good?"

He said this for no other reason than because he noticed that Olénin did not feel at ease, and was all alone among the Cossacks.

"I am just used to it," answered Olénin. "Why?"

"Hm! It would be bad if any of us fellows should smoke! It is not far to the mountains," said Lukáshka, pointing to the cleft, "and yet you won't get there so easily! How will you get home by yourself? It is dark. I will take you home if you wish," said Lukáshka. "Just ask the under-officer's permission."

"What a fine fellow!" thought Olénin, watching the Cossack's happy face. He recalled Maryánka and the kiss which he had heard by the gate, and he was sorry for Lukáshka, sorry for his lack of education.

"What bosh and nonsense!" he thought. "One man has killed another, and he is happy as though he had committed a most beautiful act. Does nothing tell him that there is no cause here for any great rejoicing? That happiness does not consist in killing, but in sacrificing yourself?"

"Now, don't you get in his way, brother!" said one of the Cossacks who had accompanied the skiff, turning to Lukáshka. "Did you hear him ask about you?"

Lukáshka raised his head.

"You mean the godson?" said Lukáshka, meaning the Chechén.

"The godson will not rise again, but his red-haired brother may be godfather."

"Let him thank God for having escaped with a whole skin!" said Lukáshka, laughing.

"What are you rejoicing at?" Olénin said to Lukáshka. "Would you rejoice if they killed your brother?"

The Cossack's eyes were smiling, as they looked at Olénin. He evidently understood what the other wanted to say, but he was above such considerations.

"Well? It does happen! Do they not kill our brothers?"

XXII.

The captain and elder rode away. Wishing to give Lukáshka some pleasure and not to walk all alone through the woods, Olénin asked the under-officer to give Lukáshka a leave of absence, which was granted. Olénin thought that Lukáshka wanted to see Maryánka, and he was in general glad to have the companionship of such an apparently agreeable and talkative Cossack. Lukáshka and Maryánka involuntarily were united in his imagination, and it gave him pleasure to think of them. "He loves Maryanka," Olénin thought, "and I might have loved her." And a strong, novel feeling of humility of spirit took possession of him on his way through the dark forest. Lukáshka, too, was light of heart. There was something resembling love between these two so different young people. Every time they looked at each other, they felt like laughing.

"What gate do you go to?" asked Olénin.

"Into the middle gate. But I will take you to the swamp. There you need not fear anything."

Olénin laughed.

"Do you think I am afraid? Go back, I thank you. I will get there myself."

"Never mind! What else have I to do? How can you help being afraid? We are," said Lukáshka, also laughing, and assuaging his vanity.

"Come to my house! We will talk and drink together, and in the morning you can leave."

"Oh, I will find a place where I can pass a night,"

Lukáshka laughed, "and the under-officer told me to be back."

"I heard you singing songs last night, and I saw you, too."

"All people — " and Luká shook his head.

"Well, are you going to marry? Is it true?" Olénin asked.

"Mother wants to get me married. But I have not yet a horse."

"You are not yet a mounted Cossack?"

"No, I am just getting ready to be one. I have no horse, and I don't know how to procure one. So they cannot get me married yet."

"How much does a horse cost?"

"We were chaffering for one the other day across the river. They would not take sixty roubles for him, — and it is a Nogáy horse."

"Will you be my life-guardsman?" (A life-guardsman was a kind of an orderly to an officer during an expedition.) "I will get that appointment for you, and will give you a horse," Olénin suddenly exclaimed. "Truly; I have two, and I do not need both."

"Why do you not need them?" Lukáshka said, laughing. "Why give it away? I will pay you for it, God permitting."

"Truly! Or will you not be my life-guardsman?" said Olénin, rejoicing at the thought of giving Lukáshka a horse. But, for some reason or other, he felt awkward and ashamed. He was trying to say something, but did not know what.

Lukáshka was the first to break the silence.

"Have you a house of your own in Russia?" he asked.

Olénin could not keep from telling him that he had not only one, but several houses.

"Are they fine houses? Larger than ours?" Lukáshka asked, good-naturedly.

"Much larger, ten times larger; three stories high," Olénin told him.

"And have you such horses as we have?"

"I have a hundred head of horses, worth three hundred and four hundred roubles apiece, — only they are not your kind of horses. Three hundred in silver! They are race-horses, you know — But I love yours better."

"Did you come here of your own will, or not?" asked Lukáshka, as though in ridicule. "You are off your path," he added, pointing to the road near which they were passing. "Keep to the right!"

"Just of my own free will," answered Olénin. "I wanted to see your country, and take part in expeditions."

"I should like myself to go out with an expedition," said Lukáshka. "Do you hear how the jackals are howling?" he added, listening attentively.

"Tell me, do you not feel terribly at having killed a man?" Olénin asked.

"What am I to be afraid of? I would gladly take part in an expedition!" Lukáshka repeated. "I am so anxious, so anxious —"

"Maybe we will go together. Our company and yours, too, will move before the holidays."

"What pleasure do you see in coming here? You have a house, and horses, and slaves. I would be celebrating all the time. Have you any rank?"

"I am a yunker, and recommended for advancement."

"Well, if you are not bragging about the things you possess, I would not have left my home. I would not leave it anyway. Do you like our life?"

"Yes; very much," said Olénin.

It was quite dark when they, conversing in this manner, reached the village. The darkness of the forest still surrounded them. The wind howled high in the tree-tops. The jackals, it seemed, suddenly moaned, laughed, and cried near them; but in front of them, in the village,

were heard the talk of women and barking of dogs; and the outlines of cabins were clearly defined, and lights gleamed, and the air was redolent with the odour, the particular odour, of dung-chip smoke. Olénin felt, more especially on that evening, that here was his house, his family, all his happiness, and that nowhere had he lived, or ever should live, as happily as in this village. That evening he loved everybody, but particularly Lukáshka! When they arrived home, Olénin, to Lukáshka's great astonishment, brought out of the stable a horse which he had bought at Gróznaya, — not the one on which he always rode, but another, — not a bad-looking, though not a very young horse, and gave it to him.

"Why should you make a gift to me?" said Lukáshka. "I have done you no service."

"Truly, it does not cost me anything," replied Olénin. "Take it, and you will make me some gift — We will go into the expedition together."

Lukáshka was embarrassed.

"How is that? A horse costs something," he said, without looking at the horse.

"Take it, do take it! You will offend me if you do not take it! Vanyúsha, take the gray out to him!"

Lukáshka took hold of the bridle.

"I thank you. Well, that was unexpected."

Olénin was as happy as a twelve-year-old boy.

"Tie him up here! It is a good horse, I bought him in Gróznaya, and he is a fine trotter. Vanyúsha, let us have some red wine! Come into the house!"

The wine was brought. Lukáshka sat down and took the wine-bowl.

"God will give me a chance to do you a good turn," he said, drinking the wine. "What is your name?"

"Dmítri Andréevich."

"Well, Mítri Andréevich, God preserve you. We will be chums. Now, you must come to see us sometime. We

are not rich people, but will know how to treat a guest. I will tell mother to let you have boiled cream or grapes, or whatever else you may need. And whenever you come to the cordon, I will be your servant, — whether on the hunt, or across the river, or wherever you may wish. A pity I did not know you the other day. I killed a fine boar! I divided him up among the Cossacks, or I would have brought him to you."

"All right, I thank you. Only do not hitch him to a team, for he has never been hitched before."

"Who would hitch a horse? I will tell you something," Lukáshka said, lowering his head. "I have a chum, Giréy-khan by name. He called me to lie in ambush on the road where people from the mountains pass by; so we will go together. I will not give you away, I will be your trusty friend."

"We will go there sometime."

Lukáshka seemed to be quite at ease, and to understand Olénin's relations with him. His calm and simplicity of address surprised Olénin and even annoyed him a little. They talked together for quite awhile, and it was late when Lukáshka, not drunk (he never was), but well filled with wine, pressed Olénin's hand and left his room.

Olénin looked out of the window to see what he would do after leaving him. Lukáshka walked slowly, with drooping head. Then, when he had taken the horse outside the gate, he suddenly shook his head, jumped upon him like a cat, threw the reins of the halter over his head, and, shouting, galloped down the street. Olénin had imagined that he would go to share his joy with Maryánka; but even though Lukáshka had not done so, Olénin felt as happy as never before in his life. He was as joyful as a child, and could not keep from telling Vanyúsha, not only about his having given the horse to Lukáshka, but why he had made him that gift, and also

about his new theory of happiness. Vanyúsha did not approve of this theory, and he explained that *L'argent il n'y a pas*, and consequently it was all nonsense.

Lukáshka rode home, leaped from his horse, and gave it to his mother, with the injunction to let it out to pasture with the Cossack herd; but he himself had to return that very night to the cordon. The dumb girl promised to take down the horse, and she explained by signs that she would make her low obeisance to the man who had given him the horse, as soon as she should see him. The old woman only shook her head at her son's recital, and in her heart decided that Lukáshka had stolen the horse, and so she ordered the dumb girl to take him to pasture before daybreak.

Lukáshka went alone to the cordon, all the time revolving in his mind Olénin's act. Though the horse, in his opinion, was not a good one, yet it was worth at least forty roubles, and Lukáshka was very happy with the gift. But he could not understand why this gift was made, and so he did not feel the least gratitude. On the contrary, indistinct suspicions of the yunker's evil intentions disquieted his mind. What these intentions were, he could not make out, but it seemed impossible to him to admit the thought that a stranger would give him a horse worth forty roubles for no reason whatsoever, and just out of kindness. It would be a different matter if he had been intoxicated, and wanted to show off. But the yunker had been sober, consequently he wanted to bribe him for some bad deed.

"That's where you are mistaken!" thought Lukáshka. "I have the horse, and as for the rest, we will see. I am not as stupid as all that. We will see who will cheat whom!" he thought, feeling the need of being on guard against Olénin, and therefore of arousing in himself a hostile feeling toward him. He did not tell anybody how he had come by his horse. He told some he had bought

him, and gave evasive answers to others. Still the people of the village soon learned the truth. Lukáshka's mother, Maryánka, Ilyá Vasílevich, and other Cossacks, who were informed of Olénin's causeless gift, were perplexed, and began to fear the yunker. In spite of these fears, the deed aroused their great respect for Olénin's simplicity and wealth.

"Listen, the yunker who is lodged at Ilyá Vasílevich's gave Lukáshka a horse worth fifty roubles," said one. "He is rich!"

"I have heard so," answered another, thoughtfully. "He must have done him some service. We shall see, we shall see what he will do! That's the 'Saver's' luck!"

"These yunkers are an awful lot of cheats," said a third. "He'll burn down a house, or do something worse yet."

XXIII.

Olénin's life ran monotonously and smoothly. He had little to do with the authorities or his companions. The position of a rich yunker in the Caucasus is in this respect exceedingly advantageous. He was not sent out to work or to military drill. For his services in an expedition he was recommended for advancement as a regular officer, but in the meantime he was left alone. The officers regarded him as an aristocrat, and therefore were on their dignity in their relations with him. Card-playing and the carousals of the officers, accompanied by singing, which were common in the army, did not appear attractive to him, and he kept aloof from the society of the officers and from their life in the village.

The life of the officers in the Cossack villages has for a long time had a definite character. Just as every yunker or officer in the fortress regularly drinks porter, gambles at cards, and talks of rewards for services in expeditions, so he in the villages regularly drinks red wine with the landlord, treats the girls to cakes and honey, flirts with the Cossack girls, with whom he falls in love; and sometimes he gets married. Olénin always lived in his own peculiar manner, and had an unconscious aversion for beaten paths. Nor did he follow here the beaten track of the life of an officer in the Caucasus.

Without making any exertion, he woke with the daylight. After drinking his tea and admiring from his porch the mountains, the morning, and Maryánka, he put

on a torn ox-hide coat, the soaked buckskins, girded on his dagger, took his gun, a pouch with a lunch and tobacco, called his dog, and after five o'clock in the morning walked into the forest back of the village. At about seven o'clock in the evening he returned, tired, famished, with five or six pheasants in his belt, sometimes with a larger animal, while the pouch with the lunch and cigarettes remained untouched. If the thoughts in his head had remained like the cigarettes in his pouch, it would be easy to see that not one thought had stirred there in the course of these fourteen hours. He returned home morally fresh, strong, and completely happy. It would have been difficult for him to say what he had been thinking about during all that time. Not thoughts, not recollections, not dreams, were rummaging through his brain, — there were only fragments of all these. He sometimes stopped to ask himself what it was he was thinking about, and he discovered himself as a Cossack working with his wife in the gardens, or as an abrék in the mountains, or as a boar running away from himself. And all this time he listened, watched, and waited for a pheasant, boar, or stag.

In the evening Uncle Eróshka was sure to be at his house. Vanyúsha brought an eighth measure of wine, and they conversed softly and drank, and separated for the night well contented. On the following day there was again hunting, again healthful fatigue, again the wine-drinking and chatting, and again the contentment. Sometimes, on a holiday or day of rest, he passed a whole day at home. Then his chief interest was Maryánka, every motion of whom he eagerly watched, without being conscious of it, from his window or from his porch. He gazed at Maryánka, and loved her (so he thought) as he loved the beauty of the mountains and of the sky, and did not think of entering into any relations with her. It seemed to him that between him and her could not exist

the relations that were possible between her and Cossack Lukáshka, and still less the relations that were possible between a wealthy officer and a Cossack maiden. It appeared to him that if he tried to do what his companions were doing, he would exchange his full enjoyment and contemplation for an abyss of torments, disappointments, and regrets. Besides, in relation to this woman he had already accomplished the feat of self-renunciation, which had afforded him so much pleasure; but, above all, he was for some reason afraid of Maryánka, and would not dare to utter one word of pleasantry to her.

One summer day Olénin did not go out hunting, and remained at home. Quite unexpectedly a Moscow acquaintance of his, a very young man whom he used to meet in society, entered his room.

"Ah, *mon cher*, my dear, how happy I was to learn that you were here!" he began, in his Moscow French jargon, and he continued to interlard his speech with French words. "I heard them say 'Olénin.' What Olénin? I was so rejoiced — So fate has brought us together. Well, how are you? What are you doing? And why here?"

Prince Byelétski told him his whole story: how he had joined the regiment for awhile, how the commander-in-chief had asked him to be his adjutant, and how he would enter his service after the expedition, although he was not in the least interested in the matter.

"If I serve here, in this wilderness, I must at least make a career — a cross — rank — and be transferred to the Guards. All this is necessary, not for my own sake, but for my relatives, for my friends. The prince has received me very well; he is a very nice kind of man," said Byelétski, without taking breath. "I have been recommended for an Anna decoration for services in the expedition. Now I am going to stay here to the

next campaign. It is superb here. What women! Well, and how do you pass your time? Our captain — you know Strátsev, a kind-hearted, stupid creature — told me that you lived here like a terrible savage, that you had nothing to do with anybody. I understand that you do not wish to become closely acquainted with the officers. I am glad we shall be able to see something of each other. I am lodging with the under-officer. What a girl his Ústenka is! I tell you she is fine!"

And more and more French and Russian words from that society which Olénin thought he had for ever abandoned were poured forth by him. The common opinion was that Byelétski was a dear, good-natured fellow. Maybe he really was; but to Olénin he appeared, in spite of his good-natured, handsome face, exceedingly disagreeable; he brought with him a strong breath of all that loathsomeness which he had renounced. But he was most annoyed because he could not, positively did not, have the strength to push away from himself that man from that society, as though that old past society had some inalienable rights upon him. He was angry at Byelétski and at himself, and against his will mingled French phrases with his conversation, took interest in the commander-in-chief and his Moscow acquaintances, and, on the basis of their speaking a French jargon in a Cossack village, referred with contempt to his fellow officers, and to the Cossacks, and treated Byelétski in a friendly manner, promising to call on him, and asking him to come to see him. However, Olénin never called on Byelétski. Vanyúsha approved of Byelétski, saying that he was a real gentleman.

Byelétski at once took up the customary life of a rich Caucasus officer in the village. Olénin could see his rapid evolution: in one month he appeared to be an old inhabitant of the village; he treated the old men, gave evening parties, and himself went to girls' evening parties, boasted

of his conquests, and even went so far that the girls and women for some reason called him *little grandfather*, while the Cossacks, who had formed a clear idea about the man who was fond of wine and women, became accustomed to him, and even liked him better than Olénin, who remained a puzzle to them.

XXIV.

It was five o'clock in the morning. Vanyúsha was on the porch, fanning the samovár with his bootleg. Olénin had already ridden down to the Térek to bathe. (He had lately discovered a new amusement, to bathe his horse in the Térek.) The landlady was in the dairy, from the chimney of which rose the dense black smoke of the oven in which a fire had just been kindled; the girl was milking the buffalo cow in the stall. "Stand still, accursed one!" was heard her impatient voice, and soon after followed the even sound of milking.

On the street, near the house, was heard the brisk tramp of the horse, and Olénin, on his beautiful, dark gray horse, shining with wet, rode bareback up to the gate. Maryánka's fair head, wrapped in a red kerchief, stuck out of the stall and again disappeared. Olénin wore a red shirt of Persian silk, a white mantle, girded by a leather strap with a dagger in it, and a tall cap. He sat rather jauntily on the wet back of his well-fed horse, and, holding his gun on his back, bent over to open the gate. His hair was still wet, his face was aglow with youth and health.

He thought he was handsome, agile, and resembling a brave; but that was a mistake. To the eye of every experienced inhabitant of the Caucasus he was still a soldier. When he noticed the girl's head thrust forward, he made a special effort to bend down gracefully, and, opening the gate and holding the bridle, cracked his whip, and rode into the yard.

"Is tea ready, Vanyúsha?" he cried, merrily, without looking at the stall. It gave him pleasure to feel his beautiful horse contracting the crupper, begging for loose reins, and swelling every muscle, ready to leap with all feet at once over the fence, and striking the dried up clay of the yard with his hoofs.

"*C'est prêt!*" answered Vanyúsha.

Olénin thought that Maryánka's beautiful head was still looking out of the shed, but he did not glance in that direction. Leaping down from his horse, Olénin caught his gun in the porch; he made an awkward motion, and looked in a frightened manner toward the stall, where no one could be seen, though the even sound of milking was still heard.

He walked into the house, and a little later came out again on the porch, and, with a book and a pipe, sat down to drink his tea on the side which was not yet reached by the oblique rays of the sun. He did not expect to go out in the forenoon, and intended to write some long-delayed letters; but he somehow was loath to leave his snug corner on the porch, and the room appeared like a prison to him. The landlady had built the fire, the girl had driven out the cattle, and, upon returning, began to collect the dung and to sling it against the fence to get it dry.

Olénin was reading, but he did not understand a word of what was said in the book which lay open before him. He kept tearing his eyes away from it, and gazing at the moving figure of the well-built young woman in front of him. Whether she walked into the damp morning shade made by the house, or whether she came out into the middle of the yard, illuminated by the cheerful splendour of the young sun, where her stately figure in the brightly coloured dress gleamed and cast a black shadow, — he was equally afraid of missing even one of her motions. It gave him pleasure to see how freely and gracefully she

bent her frame; how the rose-coloured shirt, which constituted her only attire, draped itself on her bosom and along her shapely legs; how she unbent herself, and how under her tightly fitting shirt the firm lines of her heaving breast stood out; how the narrow soles of her feet, clad in old red shoes, planted themselves on the ground, without changing their form; how her powerful arms, with sleeves rolled up, contracted their muscles as she wielded the shovel as though in anger; and how her deep black eyes sometimes gazed at him. Though her delicate eyebrows now and then gathered into a frown, her eyes expressed pleasure and consciousness of her beauty.

"Well, Olénin, have you been up long?" said Byelétski, in the coat of an officer of the Caucasus, coming into the yard and turning to Olénin.

"Ah! Byelétski!" replied Olénin, extending his hand. "What brings you so early?"

"What can I do? They sent me away. There is a party at my house to-night. Maryánka, you will come to Ústenka's?" he said, turning to the girl.

Olénin was amazed to hear Byelétski address that woman in such a familiar fashion. But Maryánka, as though not hearing what he said, bent her head, and, throwing the shovel across her shoulder, walked to the dairy with her brisk, manly strides.

"She is embarrassed, my friend, she is embarrassed," Byelétski said, as she walked away, "she is embarrassed in your presence," and, smiling cheerfully, he ran up the steps.

"What party is that? Who has sent you away?"

"At Ústenka's, my landlady's, there is a party, and you are invited. A party, — that is, cakes and a gathering of girls."

"What are we going to do there?"

Byelétski smiled slyly, and, winking, pointed with his head to the dairy where Maryánka had disappeared.

Olénin shrugged his shoulders and blushed.

"Upon my word, you are a strange man!" he said. "Well, tell me!"

Olénin scowled. Byelétski noticed this, and smiled, as though begging his pardon. "Really, I pray," he said, "you are living in the same house with her; and she is such a fine girl, an excellent girl, a perfect beauty —"

"A wonderful beauty! I have never seen such women before!" said Olénin.

"Well?" asked Byelétski, quite perplexed.

"It may be strange," replied Olénin, "but why should I not tell the truth? Women, it seems, have not existed for me ever since I have been living here. And it is good so, really it is! Well, what can we have in common with these women? It is different with Eróshka; we have a common passion — hunting."

"Well, I declare! What is there in common? What have I in common with Amália Ivánovna? It is the same thing. You will say that they are rather dirty. That is another matter. *A la guerre, comme à la guerre!*"

"But I have never known any Amália Ivánovnas, and never could get along with them," replied Olénin. "But one could not respect those women, whereas these here I respect."

"Keep on respecting them! Nobody prevents you!"

Olénin did not reply. He evidently wanted to finish what he had begun to say. It lay near to his heart.

"I know that I am an exception." (He was evidently embarrassed.) "My life has arranged itself in such a way that I see no necessity whatsoever of changing my rules; I could not even live here, let alone live as happily, as I do, if I lived in your fashion. And besides, I am looking for something else, and see something quite different from what you do."

Byelétski raised his brows incredulously.

"All the same, come to my house to-night. Maryánka will be there, and I will make you acquainted. Do come! Well, if you find it dull you can go away. Will you come?"

"I would come; but, to tell you the truth, I am seriously afraid of being carried away."

"Oh, oh, oh!" cried Byelétski. "Only come, and I will keep you down. Will you come? Your word of honour?"

"I would come, but, really, I do not understand what we shall do there, and what part we shall play there."

"Please, I beg you. Will you come?"

"Yes, I will, perhaps," said Olénin.

"You see for yourself that here are the most charming women in the world, and yet you live like a monk! Who would ever think of such a thing? Who would want to spoil his life, and not to make use of what there is? Have you heard, our company will go to Vozdvizhénskaya?"

"Hardly. I was told that Company Eight is going," said Olénin.

"No, I have received a letter from the adjutant. He writes that the prince himself will be in the expedition. I am glad of it, — I shall see him. I am beginning to be bored here."

"They say there will be an incursion soon."

"I have not heard it; but I have heard that Krinovítsyn got an Anna decoration for services in an excursion. He expected a lieutenancy," said Byelétski, laughing. "That was a disappointment to him. He has gone to see the staff about it — "

It was growing dark, and Olénin began to think of the evening party. The invitation tormented him. He wanted to go, but the thought of what was going to happen there seemed to him strange, preposterous, and a little terrifying. He knew that there would be there no Cossacks, no old women, but only girls. What would happen there? How

was he to conduct himself? What was he to say? What would they say? What relations were there between him and those wild Cossack girls? Byelétski had been telling him of such strange, cynical, and at the same time strict relations — It was strange to him to think that he would be there in one room with Maryánka, and that, perhaps, he would have to speak to her. This seemed impossible to him whenever he recalled her majestic bearing. Byelétski had told him that all that was quite simple. "Is it possible Byelétski would treat Maryánka in the same manner? It would be interesting," he thought. "No, I had better not go. All this is vile, and contemptible, and, above all, leads to nothing." But again the question tormented him: "What will it be?" and he was to a certain extent bound by his promise. He went, still undecided what to do, but upon reaching Byelétski's he stepped in.

The cabin in which Byelétski lived was just like Olénin's. It was raised on posts about six feet from the ground, and consisted of two rooms. In the first, which Olénin reached by a steep little staircase, lay feather beds, rugs, quilts, and pillows, beautifully and elegantly piled up against each other in Cossack fashion along the front wall. On the side walls hung brass basins and weapons; under the bench lay watermelons and pumpkins. In the second room was a large oven, a table, benches, and Dissenter images. Here Byelétski had his lodgings, with his folding bed, travelling portmanteaus, rug, on which his weapons were hanging, and with toilet articles and portraits scattered about the table. A silk dressing-gown was flung upon a bench. Byelétski himself, handsome and clean, lay in his underwear on the bed, reading "Les Trois Mousquetaires."

Byelétski jumped up.

"You see how I am fixed? Fine? I am glad you have come. They have been working terribly. Do you

know what a pie is made of? Of dough, with lard and grapes. But that is not the point. Just see how busy they are!"

Indeed, as they looked out of the window, they saw an unusual turmoil in the landlady's cabin. The girls kept running in and out of the vestibule, with one thing or another.

"Will it be soon?" cried Byelétski.

"Right away! Are you starved, grandfather?" and melodious laughter was heard in the cabin.

Ústenka, plump, red-cheeked, pretty, with rolled up sleeves, ran into Byelétski's room to fetch the plates.

"Keep away! I almost broke the plates," she shrieked at Byelétski. "You had better go and help us," she cried, laughing, at Olénin. "And get the cakes and candy for the girls."

"Has Maryánka come?" asked Byelétski.

"Of course. She brought some dough."

"Do you know," said Byelétski, "if one were to dress up this Ústenka, and clean her up a little, and primp her, she would be more beautiful than any of our beauties. Have you seen the Cossack woman Bórshchev? She married a colonel. Superb! What *dignité!* Where did they get it all—"

"I have not seen Mrs. Bórshchev; but, in my opinion, there can be nothing more beautiful than this attire."

"Ah, I can so easily adapt myself to any life!" said Byelétski, drawing a sigh of delight. "I will go and take a look at what they are doing."

He put on his dressing-gown, and ran out.

"You take care of the refreshments!" he cried.

Olénin sent Byelétski's orderly for cake and honey. It seemed so detestable to him to give money, as though he were bribing some one, that he did not give any definite answer to the orderly's question, "How many peppermint-cakes, and how many honey-cakes?"

"I leave it to you."

"For all this money?" the old soldier asked, significantly. "Peppermint-cakes cost more. They sell them at sixteen kopeks."

"For all the money, for all," said Olénin, sitting down at the window and wondering why it was his heart was fluttering as though he were preparing himself to do something important but bad.

He heard shouting and screaming in the room where the girls were, the moment Byéletski had entered there, and a few minutes later he saw him jump out from it and run down the stairs, accompanied by shrieks, laughter, and a general hubbub.

"They have driven me out," he said.

A few minutes later, Ústenka came into the room and solemnly invited the guests, announcing that everything was ready.

When they entered the room, they really found everything ready, and Ústenka was arranging the feather pillows against the wall. On the table, which was covered with a disproportionately small napkin, stood a decanter of red wine and some dried fish. The room was redolent with pastry and grapes. Some six girls, in holiday half-coats and with bare heads, contrary to the common rule, were keeping in the corner behind the oven, whispering, laughing, and giggling.

"I beg you humbly to honour my patron saint," said Ústenka, inviting the guests to the table.

Olénin had discovered Maryánka in the crowd of girls, who were all without exception beautiful, and he felt annoyed and pained because he made her closer acquaintance under such awkward and detestable circumstances. He felt foolish and uncomfortable, and decided to follow Byelétski's example. Byelétski went up to the table somewhat solemnly, but with ease and self-confidence, drank a glass to Ústenka's health, and invited the rest to

do likewise. Ustenka declared that the girls did not drink.

"With honey we could," said a voice in the crowd of the girls.

The orderly, who had just returned from the shop with the honey and the refreshments, was called in. The orderly glanced with a scowl, partly of envy, and partly of contempt, at the gentlemen, who, in his opinion, were having a celebration, carefully and scrupulously turned over the piece of the honeycomb and the cakes which were wrapped in gray paper, and began to expatiate on the cost of the articles, and the change he had brought back; but Byelétski drove him away.

After mixing the honey with the wine in the glasses, and lavishly scattering the three pounds of cakes on the table, Byelétski pulled the girls out of the corner by force, put them down at the table, and began to distribute the cakes among them.

Olénin involuntarily noticed how Maryánka's small sunburnt hand took hold of two round peppermint and one honey cake, and how she was in doubt what to do with them. The conversation was constrained and cheerless, in spite of Ústenka's and Byelétski's vivacity, and their attempts to cheer up the company. Olénin was embarrassed, brooded over something to say, and felt that he was rousing their curiosity, perhaps provoking their ridicule, and communicating his bashfulness to the others. He blushed, and it seemed to him that Maryánka in particular was ill at ease.

"No doubt they are waiting for us to give them some money," he thought. "How are we going to do it? Let us give it to them as soon as possible and go!"

XXV.

"How is it you do not know your lodger?" said Byelétski, turning to Maryánka.

"How am I to know him if he never comes to see us?" said Maryánka, casting a glance upon Olénin.

Olénin was startled, and his face was flushed. He answered, without knowing himself what he was saying: "I am afraid of your mother. She scolded me so the first time I called at your house."

Maryánka laughed out loud.

"So you were scared?" she said, glancing at him, and turning her head away.

That was then the first time Olénin had seen the whole face of the beautiful girl, for heretofore he had seen it only wrapped in a kerchief down to her eyes. There was good reason why she was regarded as the most beautiful girl in the village. Ústenka was a pretty girl, petite, plump, ruddy, with laughing hazel eyes, with an eternal smile on her rosy lips, for ever giggling and prattling. Maryánka, on the contrary, was by no means pretty, she was a beauty! Her features might have appeared too masculine and almost coarse, had it not been for her tall, stately form, and her powerful chest and shoulders, and chiefly for the stern and yet gentle expression of her wide black eyes, surrounded by a deep shadow beneath black brows, and for the gentle expression of her mouth and of her smile. She rarely smiled, but her smile was so much the more effective. She exhaled virgin strength and health. All the girls were pretty; but they themselves,

and Byelétski, and the orderly who had brought the cakes, all could not help looking at Maryánka, and when they addressed the girls, they turned to her in particular. She appeared as a proud and happy queen among the rest.

Byelétski endeavoured to maintain the decorum of the evening entertainment. He chattered without cessation, urged the girls to pass the wine, joked with them, and continually made improper remarks to Olénin in French about Maryánka's beauty, calling her "yours," *la vôtre*, and inviting him to follow his example. Olénin felt more oppressed. He was thinking of an excuse to walk out and run away, when Byelétski proclaimed that Ústenka, who was celebrating her name-day, should pass the wine with kisses. She consented, but with the condition that money should be placed on her plate, as this is done at weddings.

"The devil has brought me to this abominable feast!" Olénin said to himself, and he arose, intending to leave.

"Where are you going?"

"I want to fetch the tobacco," he said, intending to run, but Byelétski caught hold of his hand.

"I have some money," he said to him in French.

"There is no getting away; I shall have to pay," Olénin thought, and he was annoyed at his awkwardness. "Why can't I do the same as Byelétski does? I ought not to have come; but having come, I ought not to spoil their pleasure. I must drink in Cossack fashion." Saying this, he seized a wooden bowl that contained about eight glasses, filled it with wine, and almost drained it. The girls looked at him in amazement and almost in terror, while he was drinking. Ústenka passed around one glass more to both of them, and kissed them.

"Girls, we will have a good time now," she said, jingling on her plate the four silver roubles which they had placed there.

Olénin was no longer ill at ease. He became talkative.

"Now, you, Maryánka, pass around the wine with kisses," said Byelétski, seizing her hand.

"That is the kind of kiss I will give you," she said, raising her hand in jest, as though to strike him.

"You may kiss the little grandfather without money," said another girl.

"You are a clever girl!" said Byelétski, kissing the maiden, who was struggling to get away. "No, you pass the wine," insisted Byelétski, turning to Maryánka. "Pass it to your lodger!"

He took her hand, led her up to the bench, and seated her at Olénin's side.

"What a beauty!" he said, turning her head so as to show her profile.

Maryánka made no resistance, but, smiling proudly, surveyed Olénin with her wide eyes.

"She is a beauty!" repeated Byelétski.

"Am I not a beauty?" Maryánka's glance seemed to say. Without being conscious of what he was doing, Olénin embraced Maryánka, and was on the point of kissing her. She suddenly tore herself away, tripped up Byelétski, pulled things down from the table, and jumped to the oven. There were shouts and laughter. Byelétski whispered something to the girls, and suddenly they all rushed out of the room into the vestibule, and locked the door.

"Why did you kiss Byelétski, and won't kiss me?" asked Olénin.

"I just don't want to, and that is all," she answered, twitching her lower lip and her brows. "He is the little grandfather," she added, smiling. She went up to the door and began to knock at it. "What did you lock it for, you devils?"

"Well, let them be there, and we will stay here," said Olénin, approaching her.

She frowned, and pushed him sternly away from her.

And again she appeared to Olénin so majestic and beautiful that he came to his senses and felt ashamed of what he had done. He walked up to the door and tried to pull it open.

"Byelétski, open the door! What stupid jokes!"

Maryánka again laughed her bright, happy laugh.

"Are you afraid of me?" she asked.

"You are just as cross as your mother."

"You ought to sit more with Eróshka, then the girls would like you better," she said, smiling, and, walking up to him, looked him straight in the eyes.

He did not know what to say.

"And if I were to visit you?" he said, suddenly.

"That would be different," she said, shaking her head.

Just then Byelétski pushed the door open, and Maryánka darted away from Olénin, and in doing so her hip struck his leg.

"It is all rubbish what I have been thinking heretofore about love, and self-renunciation, and Lukáshka. There is but one kind of happiness, and he who is happy is right." This thought flashed through Olénin's mind, and, with a force which he had not suspected in himself, he seized beautiful Maryánka, and kissed her temple and cheek. Maryánka did not become angry, but only burst out laughing, and ran out to the other girls.

The evening party ended with this. The old woman, Ustenka's mother, who had just returned from her field labour, scolded all the girls, and drove them away.

XXVI.

"YES," thought Olénin, on his way home, "I only need to give myself free rein, in order to be desperately in love with this Cossack girl."

He went to bed with these feelings; he thought that all this would pass away, and he would return to his old life. But the old life did not return. His relations to Maryánka were changed. The wall which had separated them before was torn down. Olénin now exchanged greetings with her every time they met.

When the landlord arrived in order to receive the money for the lodgings, and learned of Olénin's wealth and liberality, he invited him to his house. The old woman received him kindly, and since the day of the evening entertainment Olénin frequently went in to see them, and on these occasions stayed until night. Apparently his life in the village ran as of old, but in his heart everything had completely changed. He passed his days in the forest, but about eight o'clock, when it began to grow dark, he generally went over to the ensign's house, alone, or with Uncle Eróshka. The people became so accustomed to him that they wondered whenever he did not come.

He paid well for his wine, and was a peaceful man. Vanyúsha would bring him his tea. He would seat himself in the corner near the oven. The old woman was not embarrassed by his presence, and went on with her work; and they chatted over their tea and over their wine about Cossack affairs, about their neighbours, and

about Russia, of which Olénin told them in reply to their questions.

At times he would take a book and read to himself. Maryánka, as wild as a goat, would draw up her feet and sit on the oven or in a dark corner. She did not take part in the conversation, but Olénin saw her eyes and face, heard her moving, and cracking seeds, and felt that she listened with all her being when he spoke, and he was conscious of her presence when he was reading in silence. At times it seemed to him that her eyes were directed upon him, and when he caught their sparkle, he involuntarily grew silent, and gazed upon her. Then she would hide herself, and he, pretending to be interested in his conversation with the old woman, listened to her breathing, to every motion of hers, and again awaited her glance. In the presence of others she generally was cheerful and pleasant to him, but when she was left alone with him, she grew incommunicative and rude. Sometimes he came to see them when Maryánka had not yet returned from the street; suddenly her firm steps could be heard, and her blue chintz shirt flashed by the open door. She would walk into the middle of the room and notice his presence, — and a faint smile of recognition would appear on her lips, and he would be overcome by a sensation of happiness and terror.

He asked nothing, wished nothing of her, but with every day her presence became more and more a necessity to him.

Olénin became so accustomed to the life of the village, that the past appeared to him as something quite foreign, and the future, especially outside of the world he lived in, did not interest him at all. When he received letters from home, from relatives and friends, he felt aggrieved because they mourned him as a lost man, whereas he, in his village, regarded those as lost who did not lead the life he was leading. He was convinced that he should

never regret his having torn himself away from his former life, and his living this peculiar life in the seclusion of his village. He was happy in expeditions and in the fortresses; but only here, under Uncle Eróshka's wing, in his forest, in his cabin on the outskirt of the village, but especially at the thought of Maryánka and Lukáshka, he clearly discerned the whole lie of his former life, which had provoked him even there, but which only now appeared inexpressibly contemptible and ridiculous to him.

Here he felt himself each day more and more free, and more a man. The Caucasus presented itself to him quite differently from what he had imagined it to be. He had found nothing resembling all his dreams and all the descriptions of the Caucasus of which he had heard or read.

"There are here no chestnut steeds, no cataracts, no Amalát-beks, no heroes, and no brigands," he thought. "People live here as does Nature; they die, they are born, they pair, again they are born, they fight, they drink, they eat, they have pleasure, and again they die, and there are no conditions, except those unchangeable ones which Nature has imposed upon the sun, the grass, the beasts, and the trees. They have no other laws."

For this very reason these people appeared to him, compared with himself, so beautiful, strong, and free, and gazing upon them, he felt ashamed of himself and sad. He often seriously considered throwing up everything, enrolling himself as a Cossack, buying a cabin and cattle, and marrying a Cossack maiden, — not Maryánka, whom he had renounced in favour of Lukáshka, — and living with Uncle Eróshka, fishing and hunting with him, and going on expeditions with the Cossacks.

"Why don't I do that? What am I waiting for?" he asked himself. And he egged himself on and put himself to shame: "Am I afraid to do that which I myself have found to be sensible and just? Is the desire to

be a simple Cossack, to live close to Nature, to do no one any harm, but, on the contrary, to do people some good, — is the dream of all this more stupid than the dreams I used to have, — for example, to be a minister, or a general?"

But a voice told him to wait, and not to be in a hurry. He was restrained by a dim consciousness that he could not live entirely Eróshka's and Lukáshka's life, because his happiness was of a different nature, — he was restrained by the thought that happiness consisted in self-renunciation. His act toward Lukáshka did not cease to give him pleasure. He continually searched for opportunities to sacrifice himself for others, but these opportunities did not present themselves. At times he forgot this newly discovered recipe for happiness, and considered himself capable of living entirely Eróshka's life; but then he would suddenly come to his senses again, and cling once more to the thought of conscious self-renunciation, and on the basis of this thought he would calmly and proudly look upon all people and upon the happiness of others.

XXVII.

Before the vintage, Lukáshka came on horseback to see Olénin. He looked even more dashing than usual.

"Well, are you going to get married?" Olénin asked, giving him a warm reception.

Lukáshka gave no direct answer.

"You see, I have swapped off your horse across the river. This is a horse! It is a Kabardá horse from Lov's stud Távro. I can tell a good horse."

They examined the new steed, and made him go through various evolutions in the yard. He was indeed an uncommonly good animal; he was a bay gelding, broad and long, with the glossy hair, bushy tail, and soft, delicate mane and withers of a thoroughbred. He was so plump that one could go to sleep on his back, as Lukáshka expressed it. His hoofs, eyes, and teeth were as delicate and sharply outlined as they only are in horses of the purest breed. Olénin could not help admiring the horse. He had not seen such a beauty in the Caucasus.

"And how he rides!" said Lukáshka, patting his neck. "What a canter! And he is so intelligent! He follows his master."

"Did you give much to boot?" asked Olénin.

"I did not count," replied Lukáshka, smiling. "I got it from a chum."

"It is a wonderfully fine horse! How much will you take for it?" asked Olénin.

"I was offered one hundred and fifty roubles, but I will give him to you for nothing," Lukáshka said, merrily.

"Say the word, and you shall have him. I will take off the saddle, and you may take him."

"No, under no condition."

"Well, then I have brought you a memento," said Lukáshka, ungirding himself, and taking down one of the two daggers that were stuck in the belt. "I got it beyond the river."

"Thank you!"

"Mother told me she would herself bring you some grapes."

"That is not necessary, for we will square up accounts some day. I am not going to give you any money for it."

"How could that be among chums? Giréy-khan, the one across the river, took me to his house, and told me to select any I pleased. So I took this sabre. Such is the custom among us."

They went into the room and took a drink.

"Well, are you going to stay here awhile?" asked Olénin.

"No, I have come to say farewell. They are sending me away from the cordon to a company beyond the Térek. I am leaving to-day with friend Nazárka."

"And when will the wedding be?"

"I will soon come down here for the betrothal, and then back again to my duty," Lukáshka replied, reluctantly.

"How is that? Will you not go in to see your bride?"

"No! What's the use of looking at her? When you are out on a campaign, ask at our company for Lukáshka the Broad. There are a lot of wild boars there! I have killed two myself. I will show you the place."

"Well, good-bye! Christ preserve you!"

Lukáshka mounted his horse, and, without showing himself to Maryánka, made some evolutions as he rode out into the street, where Nazárka was already waiting for him.

"Well? Sha'n't we go in?" asked Nazárka, winking in the direction where Yámka lived.

"Here," said Lukáshka, "take my horse over to her place, and if I am not back for a long time, give him some hay. In the morning I will be in the company."

"Didn't the yunker give you another present?"

"No! I am glad I got off with a dagger, for he was beginning to ask for the horse," said Lukáshka, dismounting and turning the horse over to Nazárka.

He darted into the yard under Olénin's very window, and went up to the window of the ensign's cabin. It was quite dark. Maryánka, in nothing but her shirt, was combing her braid, previous to going to bed.

"It is I," whispered the Cossack.

Maryánka's face bore an austerely indifferent expression, but it suddenly grew animated the moment she heard her name. She raised the window, and leaned out of it, with an expression of fear and joy.

"What is it? What do you want?" she said.

"Open the door!" said Lukáshka. "Let me in for a little while! It is dreadfully dull without you!"

He took her head in his arms, through the window, and kissed it.

"Really, open the door!"

"What is the use of speaking foolish things! I told you I will not let you in. Are you here for long?"

He did not answer, and only kept kissing her. And she was satisfied.

"You see, it is not so easy to hug you through the window," said Lukáshka.

"Maryánushka!" was heard the old woman's voice. "Who is there with you?"

Lukáshka took off his cap so as not to be recognized, and crouched under the window.

"Begone at once!" whispered Maryánka.

"Lukáshka was here," she replied to her mother. "He was asking for father."

"Well, send him here!"

"He is gone. He said he had no time."

Indeed, Lukáshka, bending down, ran with rapid steps from the window, and out of the yard, and away to Yámka's; none but Olénin had seen him. After drinking about two bowls of wine, he and Nazárka rode out of the village. The night was warm, dark, and calm. They rode in silence, and only the thud of the horses' hoofs was heard. Lukáshka started a song about Cossack Mingál, but, without finishing the first verse, he stopped and turned to Nazárka.

"You know she did not let me in!" he said.

"Oh!" exclaimed Nazárka. "I knew she would not let you in. Do you know what Yámka told me? She said the yunker is now keeping company with her. Uncle Eróshka was bragging that he got a fowling-piece from the yunker for getting him Maryánka."

"He is lying, the devil!" Lukáshka said, angrily. "She is not that kind of girl. But I will smash the ribs of the old devil," and he started his favourite song.

"From the village it was, from Izmáylovo,
From the well-loved garden of the nobleman,
There a clear-eyed falcon from the garden flew;
And right after him a young huntsman rode,
And the clear-eyed falcon to his right hand he called.
The clear-eyed falcon gave this answer:
'You did not know how to keep me in the golden cage,
Nor knew how to hold me in your right hand,
So now I will fly to the blue sea;
There I myself will kill the white swan,
And of the swan's sweet flesh I will have my fill.'"

XXVIII.

The ensign was celebrating the betrothal. Lukáshka was in the village, but did not call on Olénin. Olénin himself did not go to the celebration, to which the ensign had invited him. He felt sadder than he had felt since his arrival in the village. He saw Lukáshka, in his best attire, walk in the evening with his mother to the ensign's, and he was tormented by the thought that Lukáshka was cold to him. Olénin shut himself up in his room, and began to write his diary.

"I have thought much and changed much of late," wrote Olénin, "and I have reached the truth which is written in the A B C book. In order to be happy, I must do this one thing, — love, and love with self-renunciation, love all and everything, and spread on all sides the spider-web of love: I must take all who fall into it. Thus I have taken Vanyúsha, Uncle Eróshka, Lukáshka, Maryánka."

As Olénin was finishing this sentence, Uncle Eróshka came in to see him. Eróshka was in the happiest frame of mind. When calling upon him one evening a few days before, Olénin found him in his yard engaged, with a happy and proud mien, in deftly flaying the carcass of a wild boar with a small knife. His dogs, and among them his favourite Lyam, were lying about, softly wagging their tails, and looking at his work. The urchins respectfully watched him from over the fence, and did not even tease him, as was their custom. The women of his neighbourhood, who were not as a rule especially kind to him, saluted him, and brought him, one a little jug of red

wine, another some boiled cream, and a third some pastry. The next morning Eróshka was sitting in his shed, all covered with blood, and selling wild boar meat by the pound, either for money, or for wine. On his face it was written, "God has given me luck, and I have killed a wild boar; now everybody needs the uncle." In consequence of this he, naturally, took to drinking, and this was the fourth day of his spree, during which he had not left the village. In addition to this, he had been drinking at the betrothal.

Uncle Eróshka came away from the ensign's cabin dead drunk, with a flushed face, and dishevelled beard, but in a new red half-coat, embroidered with galloons, and with a gourd balaláyka, which he had brought with him from across the river. He had long ago promised Olénin this pleasure, and was now in the proper mood for it. When he saw that Olénin was busy writing, he was disappointed.

"Write, write, my father," he said, in a whisper, as though supposing that a spirit was sitting between him and the paper, and, fearing to disturb him, he sat down noiselessly and softly on the floor. Olénin cast a look at him, ordered some wine, and continued to write. It was dull for Eróshka to drink alone. He wanted to chat.

"I have been to the betrothal at the ensign's. But they are swine! I don't want them! And so I came here."

"Where did you get that balaláyka?" asked Olénin, continuing to write.

"I went across the river, my father, and got the balaláyka," he said, in just as soft a voice. "I am a great hand at playing. I can play Tartar, Cossack, gentlemen's, soldiers' songs, any you may wish."

Olénin glanced at him a second time, smiled, and continued to write.

His smile encouraged the old man.

"Throw it away, my father! Throw it away!" he suddenly exclaimed, resolutely. "Well, suppose they have insulted you! Give them up, spit at the whole affair! What are you writing and writing for? What sense is there?"

And he mocked Olénin, tapping his stout fingers on the floor, and screwing his puffed-up face into a contemptuous grimace.

"What is the use of writing documents? Celebrate, and you will be a fine fellow!"

About writing his head could form no other conception than that it was for some dangerous pettifoggery.

Olénin burst out laughing, and so did Eróshka. He sprang up from the floor, and began to show off his art of playing his balaláyka and singing Tartar songs.

"What is the use writing, my good man! You will do better to listen to what I will sing to you! When you are dead, you will not hear any songs. Celebrate!"

At first he sang a song of his own composition, with dancing accompaniment:

"A di-di-di-di-di-li,
Did you see him? Where was he?
In the market in a store,
Selling pins by the score."

Then he sang a song which his former sergeant had taught him:

"On Monday in love I fell,
All Tuesday I suffered woe,
On Wednesday I to her did tell,
On Thursday was no answer, though.
On Friday came her reply,
Not to wait for any joy.
And on Saturday I swore
That on earth I'd live no more;
But on Sunday changed my mind, —
Cast my sorrow to the wind."

And again:

"A di-di-di-di-di-li,
Did you see him? Where was he?"

Then, winking, twitching his shoulders, and dancing, he sang:

"I will kiss thee, will embrace thee,
With red ribbons will I lace thee,
Hope I'll name thee, — hope to me!
Dost thou love me faithfully?"

And he became so excited that he posed in dashing attitudes, playing his instruments all the while, and started whirling over the room.

"Di-di-li," and other gentlemen's songs he sang only for Olénin. Later in the evening, when he had drunk another three glasses of red wine, he recalled bygone days, and sang genuine Cossack and Tartar songs. In the middle of one of his favourite songs, his voice suddenly quivered, and he grew silent, continuing only to strum his balaláyka.

"Ah! my dear friend!" he said.

Olénin turned his eyes upon him, when he heard the strange sound of his voice: the old man was weeping. Tears stood in his eyes, and one tear trickled down his cheek.

"Gone is my youth, it will never return," he said, sobbing, and grew silent. "Drink! Why don't you drink?" he suddenly shouted, in his deafening voice, without wiping away his tears.

He was stirred more especially by a mountain song. There were but few words in it, and the whole charm consisted in the melancholy refrain, "Ay! Day! Dalalay!" Eróshka translated the words of the song:

"The young brave took his plunder from the village into the mountain; the Russians came, burnt the village, killed all the men, and took all the women prisoners.

The young brave returned from the mountains: where the village had been was a waste; his mother was not; his brothers were not; his house was not; one tree alone was standing. The brave sat down under the tree and wept: 'Alone, like thee, alone am I left!' and the brave began to sing, 'Ay! Day! Dalalay!'"

And this moaning, heartrending refrain the old man repeated several times.

Having finished the last refrain, Eróshka suddenly seized the gun from the wall, darted out into the yard, and fired off both barrels into the air. And he sang again, more mournfully still, "Ay! Day! Dalalay a-a!" and stopped.

Olénin had followed him out on the porch, and was silently gazing at the dark, starry heaven, in the direction where the fire from the gun had flashed. The ensign's house was lighted up, and voices were heard there. In the yard a bevy of girls were crowding near the porch and the windows, and running from the dairy to the vestibule. A few Cossacks rushed out of the vestibule and, unable to restrain themselves, gave the war-cry, to express their approbation of Uncle Eróshka's refrain and shots.

"Why are you not at the betrothal?" asked Olénin.

"God be with them! God be with them!" said the old man, who had evidently been offended there in some manner. "I do not like them! I do not like them! Ah, what a people! Let us go into the room! They are celebrating by themselves, and we by ourselves."

Olénin returned to his room.

"Well, and is Lukáshka happy? Will he not come to see me?" he asked.

"Lukáshka? People have told him a lie: they have told him that I had brought the girl to you," said the old man, in a whisper. "The girl? She will be ours, if we want her; give more money, and she will be ours! I will do it for you, truly I will."

"No, uncle, money will not accomplish anything, if she does not love. You had better not speak of it."

"We are both disliked, — we are orphans," suddenly said Uncle Eróshka, and again burst into tears.

Olénin drank more than usual, while listening to the old man's stories.

"Now, my Lukáshka is happy," he thought; but he was sad. The old man was so drunk that evening that he fell down on the floor, and Vanyúsha had to call in the aid of some soldiers, and then use all his strength to drag him out. He was so furious at the old man for his bad behaviour that he did not say anything in French.

XXIX.

It was the month of August. For several days in succession there had not been a cloud in the sky. The sun's heat was intolerable, and from early morning blew a hot wind, raising clouds of burning sand from the dunes and the roads, and carrying it in the air over the reeds, trees, and villages. The grass and the leaves of the trees were covered with dust; the roads and salt marshes were dry, and sounded hollow when trod upon. The water in the Térek had been low for a long time, and it rapidly disappeared and dried up in the ditches. The miry shore of the pond near the village, all trampled up by the cattle, looked bare, and the whole day long could be heard the splashing and shouting of the boys and girls in the water.

In the steppe the dunes and reeds were drying up, and the cattle, lowing during the day, ran away into the fields. The wild animals had wandered away into distant reeds, and into the mountains beyond the Térek. Gnats and little flies hovered in swarms over the lowlands and villages. The snow-capped mountains were shrouded in gray mist. The air was rare and ill-smelling. Abréks were said to have forded the shoaling river, and to be galloping on this side. The sun set each evening in a fiery red glow.

It was the busiest time of the year. The whole population of the villages swarmed in the melon fields and in the vineyards. The gardens were wildly overgrown with twining verdure that afforded a cool, dense shade. From

all sides could be seen the heavy clusters of ripe black grapes amidst the broad sunlit leaves. Over the dusty roads, which led to the gardens, slowly proceeded the squeaking ox-carts, loaded to the top with the black grapes. On the dusty road lay clusters that were crushed by the wheels. Little boys and girls, in shirts soiled with grape-juice, ran after their mothers, with bunches in their hands and mouths. On the road one constantly met ragged labourers, carrying on their powerful shoulders wicker baskets full of grapes.

Girls, wrapped in kerchiefs up to the eyes, led the oxen that were hitched to the heavily laden carts. Soldiers, meeting the Cossack girls, asked them for some grapes, and they, climbing upon the carts, while they were in motion, would take large handfuls and throw them into the soldiers' outstretched coat flaps.

In some yards they were already pressing the grapes. The air was redolent with the grape-skins. Blood-red troughs could be seen under the sheds, and Nogáy labourers, with their trouser legs rolled up and their calves stained, were to be seen in the yards. The pigs snorted as they feasted on the skins, and wallowed in them. The flat roofs of the dairies were thickly covered with dark, amber clusters drying in the sun. Crows and magpies, picking up the seeds, pressed close to the roofs, and flitted from place to place.

The fruits of the year's labours were joyfully gathered, and the fruit of the year's harvest was uncommonly abundant and good.

In the shady green vineyards, amidst a sea of grape-vines, on all sides sounded laughter, songs, merriment, feminine voices, and flashed by the bright, coloured dresses of women.

Precisely at noon, Maryánka was sitting in her garden, in the shade of a peach-tree, and taking out a dinner for the family from the unhitched cart. In front of her, the

ensign, who had returned from his school, was sitting on a horse-blanket that was spread on the ground, and washing his hands by pouring water upon them from a small pitcher. Her little brother, who had just come up from the pond, and was wiping his face with his sleeves, was restlessly watching his sister and his mother, in expectation of the dinner, and panting heavily.

The old mother, with sleeves rolled up over her sunburnt arms, was placing grapes, dried fish, boiled cream, and bread on a low, round Tartar table. Having wiped his hands, the ensign doffed his cap, made the sign of the cross, and moved up to the table. The boy grasped the pitcher and began to drink eagerly. The mother and the daughter, drawing their feet under them, sat down at the table.

But the heat was also insufferable in the shade. There was a stench in the air over the garden. The strong, warm wind, which blew through the branches, did not bring any freshness, but only monotonously waved the tops of the pear, peach, and mulberry trees that were scattered through the gardens. The ensign, having said another prayer, brought out from behind his back a jug of red wine that was covered with a grape-vine leaf, and having drunk from the mouth of it, handed it to the old woman. The ensign wore nothing but his shirt, which was open at the neck and disclosed his muscular and hairy chest. His thin, cunning face was cheerful. Neither his attitude nor his speech betrayed his customary shrewdness: he was happy and natural.

"Shall we finish up with the strip behind the shed this evening?" he asked, wiping his wet beard.

"We shall, if only the weather will hold. The Démkins have not yet harvested one-half," she added. "Ústenka alone is working, and she is killing herself."

"What else did you expect?" the old man said, proudly.

"Here, take a drink, Maryánushka!" said the old

woman, passing the jug to the girl. "Now, if God will grant it, we shall have the money with which to celebrate your wedding," said the old woman.

"That's ahead yet," said the ensign, slightly frowning.

The girl lowered her head.

"But why not speak of it?" said the old woman. "The affair has been settled, and the time is not far off."

"Don't talk of the future," again said the ensign. "Now is the time for harvesting."

"Have you seen Lukáshka's new horse?" asked the old woman. "The one Dmítri Andréevich had given him, he has no longer; he has swapped him off."

"No, I have not seen him. I have been talking to-day with the lodger's servant," said the ensign. "He says he has again received a thousand roubles."

"A rich man, in short," the old woman confirmed his statement.

The whole family was happy and contented.

The work proceeded satisfactorily. There was a greater abundance of grapes than usual, and they were better than they had expected.

Having eaten her dinner, Maryánka gave the oxen some grass, folded her half-coat under her head, and lay down under the cart, on the trampled, succulent grass. She was clad in nothing but a red silk kerchief on her head, and a faded blue chintz shirt; but she felt intolerably hot. Her face was burning; her legs moved restlessly; her eyes were covered with a film of sleep and weariness; her lips opened involuntarily, and her breast heaved high and heavily.

The harvest-time had begun two weeks ago, and the hard, uninterrupted work had occupied all the life of the young girl. She jumped up from bed with the dawn, washed her face in cold water, wrapped herself with a kerchief, and ran barefooted to the cattle. She hastily put on her shoes and her half-coat, and, tying some bread

in a bundle, hitched the oxen, and went for the whole day to the vineyard. There she rested but one hour; she cut the grapes and carried the baskets, and in the evening, merry and not at all tired, she returned to the village, leading the oxen by a rope, and urging them on with a long stick. After housing the cattle in the twilight, she filled her wide shirt-sleeve with seeds, and went to the corner to laugh with the girls. But the moment the evening glow gave place to darkness, she walked back to the house, and, having eaten her supper in the dark dairy, with her father, her mother, and her little brother, she walked into the room, free from cares and healthy, and seated herself on the oven and, half-dozing, listened to the lodger's conversation. The moment he left, she threw herself down on the bed, and slept until morning a quiet, sound sleep. The next day was the same. She had not seen Lukáshka since the betrothal, and she quietly awaited the day of her wedding. She was now accustomed to the lodger, and it gave her pleasure to feel his steady glance resting upon her.

XXX.

Though it was impossible to find a comfortable place in the heat, and the gnats were circling in swarms in the cool shade of the cart, and the boy, tossing, kept pushing her, Maryánka drew her kerchief over her head, and was going to sleep, when Ústenka, her neighbour, suddenly came running to her and, darting under the cart, lay down alongside her.

"Now, sleep, girls, sleep!" said Ústenka, finding a place under the cart. "Hold on," she exclaimed, "that will not do!"

She jumped up, broke off some green branches, placed them against the wheels of the cart, and threw a half-coat over them.

"Let me in," she called out to the little boy, again crawling under the cart. "Cossacks ought not to stay with the girls! Go!"

When Ustenka was left all alone with her friend under the cart, she suddenly began to hug Maryánka with both her arms, and, pressing close to her, began to kiss her cheeks and neck.

"My dear one! My sweetheart!" she said, breaking out into her delicate, ringing laughter.

"I declare, you have learned this from the little grandfather," replied Maryánka, warding her off. "Come, stop it!"

And both of them burst out laughing so that the mother scolded them.

"Are you jealous?" Ustenka said, in a whisper.

"Don't talk nonsense! Let me sleep! What did you come for?"

But Ústenka would not quiet down.

"I want to tell you something!"

Maryánka raised herself on her elbow, and adjusted the kerchief that had slipped down.

"What is it?"

"I know something about your lodger."

"There is nothing to know," replied Maryánka.

"You are a sly girl!" said Ústenka, nudging her with her elbow, and laughing. "Won't you tell me anything? Does he come to see you?"

"Yes. What of it?" said Maryánka, suddenly blushing.

"Now, I am a simple girl, and will tell everybody. Why should I hide it?" said Ústenka, and her gay, ruddy face assumed a pensive expression. "Am I doing anybody any harm? I love him, that's all!"

"The little grandfather, you mean?"

"Yes."

"That is sinful!" replied Maryánka.

"O Maryánka! When is one to have a good time, if not while one has a girl's freedom? When I marry a Cossack, I shall begin bearing children, and know what cares are. Now, you just marry Lukáshka, then you won't have joy in your mind; but there will be children, and work."

"What of it? Some are quite happy when married. It does not make much difference!" Maryánka answered, calmly.

"Do tell me, what has there been between you and Lukáshka?"

"What? He sent go-betweens. Father put it off for a year; but there has been a betrothal, and in the autumn I am to be married."

"What did he say to you?"

Maryánka smiled.

"What they always say. He said he loved me! He kept asking me to go to the garden with him."

"Just like pitch! I guess you did not go! What a fine fellow he is now! A first-class brave! He is all the time celebrating at the company. The other day our Kírka came down, and told me what a horse he had swapped off! I suppose he feels lonely for you. What else did he say?" Ústenka asked Maryánka.

"You want to know everything," laughed Maryánka. "He once rode up in the night to the window, — he was drunk. He asked me to let him in."

"Well, and you did not let him in?"

"Let him in! When I once say no, that's the end of it! I am as firm as a rock," Maryánka replied, seriously.

"He is a fine fellow! Let him only want it, and no girl will disdain him!"

"Let him go to other girls," Maryánka answered, proudly.

"Are you not sorry for him?"

"I am, but I will commit no folly. That is wrong."

Ústenka suddenly lowered her head on her friend's breast, embraced her with both her hands, and shook with laughter that was choking her.

"You are a stupid fool!" she said, out of breath. "You do not want any happiness," and again she began to tickle Maryánka.

"Oh, stop!" said Maryánka, screaming through her laughter. "You have crushed Lazútka."

"Just look at the devils! What fun! Stop it!" was heard the drowsy voice of the old woman beyond the cart.

"You do not want any happiness," repeated Ústenka, in a whisper, half sitting up. "And you are a lucky girl, upon my word! How you are loved! You are

pockmarked, but you are loved. Ah, if I were in your place, I would twist that lodger around my little finger! I watched him when you were at our house; he looked as though he would eat you with his eyes. My little grandfather has given me a lot of things! But yours, you know, is the richest among the Russians. His orderly said that they had serfs of their own."

Maryánka arose, and smiled, pensively.

"This is what he, the lodger, once told me," she said, biting a blade of grass. "He said, 'I should like to be Cossack Lukáshka, or your little brother, Lazútka.' What did he say that for?"

"He was just saying anything that came into his head," replied Ústenka. "Mine does say such a lot of things! Like a crazy man!"

Maryánka fell with her head on the folded half-coat, threw her arm around Ústenka's shoulder, and closed her eyes.

"He wanted to come to-day to the vineyard to work. Father invited him," she said, after a moment's silence, and fell asleep.

XXXI.

The sun had now come out from behind the pear-tree that shaded the cart, and, with its slanting rays that passed through the arbour which Ústenka had built, burnt the faces of the girls who were sleeping under the cart. Maryánka awoke, and began to arrange her kerchief. As she looked around, she saw the lodger beyond the pear-tree, standing with his gun on his shoulder and speaking with her father. She gave Ústenka a push, and, smiling, pointed silently to him.

"I went out yesterday, but did not find one," said Olénin, restlessly looking all about him, but not discovering Maryánka behind the branches.

"You had better go to that district, which you will reach by going along the circumference; there, in the neglected garden, which is called a wilderness, you will always find some hares," said the ensign, at once changing his language.

"Who would think of hunting the hare in vintage time! You would do better if you came to help us! Come and work with the girls!" said the old woman. "Come now, girls, get up!" she cried.

Maryánka and Ústenka were whispering to each other, and could not keep from laughing under the cart.

Ever since it had become known that Olénin had presented Lukáshka with a horse worth fifty roubles, the ensign and his wife had been more friendly to him; the ensign, in particular, was pleased with his closer friendship with his daughter.

"I do not know how to work," said Olénin, trying not to look through the green branches under the cart, where he had espied Maryánka's blue shirt and red kerchief.

"Come along, I will give you some peaches," said the old woman.

"As is the old Cossack hospitality, and mere woman's foolishness," said the ensign, explaining and, as it were, correcting the words of the old woman. "In Russia, I suppose, you have eaten for your pleasure not so much peaches as pineapple preserves and jams."

"So there are some hares in the neglected garden?" asked Olénin. "I will go down there," and, casting a cursory glance through the green branches, he lifted his cap and disappeared between the regular green rows of the vineyard.

The sun was hidden behind the enclosures of the gardens, and its scattered rays were gleaming through the translucent leaves, when Olénin returned to the ensign's vineyard. The wind had subsided, and a fresh coolness was wafted through the vineyards. Even from a distance Olénin instinctively recognized Maryánka's blue shirt through the rows of the grape-vines, and, picking off grapes, he walked up to her. His panting dog also now and then tore off a low hanging bunch with his dripping mouth. With flushed face, rolled up sleeves, and the kerchief falling below her chin, Maryánka deftly cut the heavy clusters and laid them down in wicker baskets. Without letting the vine, which she was holding, out of her hands, she stopped, smiled graciously, and again went to work. Olénin went up to her, and slung his gun over his back, so as to have his hands free.

"Where are your people? God aid you! Are you alone?" was what he wanted to say, but he said nothing, and only raised his cap. He did not feel at ease when he was left alone with Maryánka, but he walked over to her, as though to torment himself.

"You will kill a woman yet, carrying the gun that way," Maryánka said.

"No, I won't!"

They were both silent.

"You had better help me."

He drew out his pocket-knife and began to cut off the clusters in silence. He fetched out from underneath some leaves a heavy, solid bunch, weighing about three pounds, in which the grapes were crowding each other into flattened shapes, and he showed it to Maryánka.

"Shall I cut them all? This one is still green."

"Give it to me!"

Their hands met. Olénin took hers, and she glanced at him, smiling.

"Well, so you are going to get married soon?" he said.

She did not answer, but, turning away from him, gave him a stern look from her eyes.

"Do you love Lukáshka?"

"What is that to you?"

"I am jealous."

"What of it?"

"Really, you are such a beauty!"

And he suddenly had terrible scruples for having said it. His words, he thought, sounded so detestable. He flushed, lost his composure, and took both her hands.

"Such as I am, I am not for you! What are you laughing about?" replied Maryánka, but her glance showed conclusively that she knew he was not laughing.

"Laughing? If you only knew how I —"

His words sounded even more detestable, and less in accord with his feelings; but he continued, "I can't tell what I should be willing to do for you —"

"Keep away, you stick to me like pitch."

But her face, her sparkling eyes, her swelling bosom, her shapely legs, said something quite different. It seemed to him that she understood perfectly how detestable every-

thing was that he had said, but that she was above all such considerations; it seemed to him that she had long known all he wished to say, but could not, and that she only wanted to know how he would say it all. And how could she help knowing it, since he wished to tell her all she herself was? "She does not want to understand, she does not want to answer," he thought.

"Hallo!" suddenly was heard, not far beyond the vineyard, Ústenka's thin voice and her delicate laughter. "Come, Dmítri Andréevich, and help me! I am all alone!" she cried to Olénin, thrusting her round, naïve little face through the leaves.

Olénin did not answer, nor stir from the spot.

Maryánka continued to cut the clusters, but constantly gazed at the lodger. He began to say something, but stopped, shrugged his shoulders, and, shouldering his gun, walked out of the garden with rapid strides.

XXXII.

Once or twice he stopped to listen to the ringing laughter of Maryánka and Ústenka, who, having come together, were shouting something. Olénin passed the whole evening hunting in the woods. He did not bag anything, and returned home after dark. As he crossed the yard, he noticed the open door of the dairy, and the blue shirt flashing by within. He called unusually loud to Vanyúsha, to let his arrival be known, and seated himself in his customary place on the porch. The ensign and his wife had already returned from the vineyard; they came out of the dairy, walked over to their cabin, but did not invite him in.

Maryánka went twice out of the gate. Once, in a half-light, he thought she looked back at him. He eagerly followed every motion of hers, but could not make up his mind to walk up to her. When she had disappeared in the cabin, he descended from the porch, and began to pace the yard. But Maryánka did not come out again.

Olénin passed a sleepless night in the yard, listening to every sound in the ensign's cabin. He heard them talking in the evening, then eating their supper, and taking out the cushions, and lying down to sleep; he heard Maryánka laughing at something, and then he heard how all the noises died down. The ensign said something in a whisper to his wife, and somebody breathed heavily.

He went to his room. Vanyúsha was sleeping, with-

out being undressed. Olénin envied him, and again went out promenading in the yard, all the time waiting for something; but nobody came, nobody stirred; he could hear only the even breathing of three people. He could tell Maryánka's breathing, and he listened to it, and to the thudding of his own heart. Everything was quiet in the village; the late-moon had risen, and he could discern the cattle that were panting in the yards, now lying down, and now slowly getting up.

Olénin asked himself, in anger, "What do I want?" and could not tear himself away from the enticement of the night. Suddenly he heard distinct steps, and the creaking of the floor in the ensign's cabin. He rushed to the door; and again nothing was heard but the even breathing; and again, after drawing a deep breath, the buffalo turned around, rose on her fore legs, then got completely up, switched her tail, and something splashed evenly on the dry clay of the yard, and again she lay down, with a groan, in the glamour of the moon —

He asked himself, "What am I to do?" and took his final resolve to go to bed; but some sounds were heard again, and in his imagination rose the image of Maryánka, walking out into the misty moonlit night, and again he rushed to the window, and again steps were heard. Just before daybreak he walked over to the window, pushed the shutter, ran up to the door, and indeed heard Maryánka's deep breath and steps. He took hold of the latch, and knocked. Cautious, bare feet, hardly causing the deals to creak, approached the door. The latch was moved, the door creaked, an odour of wild marjoram and pumpkins was wafted to him, and Maryánka's whole figure appeared on the threshold. He saw her but a moment in the moonlight. She slammed the door, and, saying something under her breath, ran back with light steps. Olénin began lightly to tap on the door, but there was no answer. He ran up to the window

and listened. Suddenly he was struck by a shrill, whining voice.

"Glorious!" said an undersized Cossack in a white lambskin cap, walking close up to Olénin from the yard. "I have seen it all! Glorious!"

Olénin recognized Nazárka and was silent, not knowing what to do, or say.

"Glorious! I will go to the village office to report the matter, and I will tell her father, too. A fine ensign's daughter! She is not satisfied with one."

"What do you want of me? What do you want?" said Olénin.

"Nothing! All I will do is to report at the office."

Nazárka spoke in a very loud voice, evidently on purpose.

"I declare, you are a clever yunker!"

Olénin trembled and was pale.

"Come here, here!"

He clutched his hand, and led him up to his cabin.

"There was nothing. She did not let me in, and I did nothing — She is virtuous —"

"Well, let them settle the matter," said Nazárka.

"I will give you something all the same — Just wait!"

Nazárka was silent. Olénin ran into his cabin, and brought out ten roubles for the Cossack.

"There has been nothing the matter, but I am to blame, nevertheless; so I give you this! Only, for God's sake, tell nobody! Nothing has happened —"

"Farewell," said Nazárka, smiling, and went away.

Nazárka had come that night to the village, by Lukáshka's order, to find a place for a stolen horse, and, on his way home, heard the sound of steps. He returned the next morning to the company, and, boasting, told his chum how cleverly he had procured ten roubles. The next morning Olénin called at the ensign's, and no one knew anything. He did not speak with Maryánka, and she

only smiled, looking at him. He again passed a sleepless night, pacing the yard in vain. The following day he purposely passed in the woods hunting, and in the evening he went to Byelétski's, to run away from himself. He was afraid of himself, and swore he would not call again at the ensign's. The following night Olénin was wakened by the sergeant. The company was to make an incursion at once. Olénin was rejoiced at this incident, and was making up his mind never again to return to the village.

The incursion lasted four days. The chief desired to see Olénin, to whom he was related, and offered him a place on the staff. Olénin declined it. He could not live away from the village, and asked to be sent back. For his work during the campaign he received a soldier's cross, for which he had been hankering before; but now he was quite indifferent to this decoration, and still more indifferent about his advancement to the rank of a regular officer, which was still late in coming. He rode with Vanyúsha down to the line, without meeting with any mishap, and by several hours got the start of his company. Olénin passed the whole evening on the porch, looking at Maryánka. The whole night he again aimlessly and thoughtlessly paced the yard.

XXXIII.

THE next morning Olénin awoke late. The ensign's family was gone. He did not go hunting; he now picked up a book, and now walked out on the porch, and again walked into the room, and lay down on the bed. Vanyúsha thought he was ill. In the evening Olénin arose with a full determination, took up a pen, and wrote until late into the night. He wrote a letter, but did not send it off, because no one would have understood what he wanted to say, nor was there any reason why any one but Olénin should have understood it. This is what he wrote:

"I receive from Russia letters of sympathy; people are afraid that I will perish in the wilderness, where I have buried myself. They say of me: 'He will lose his polish, will fall behind in everything, will take to drinking, and, what is worse, will probably marry a Cossack woman. There was good reason,' they say, 'for Ermolóv to have remarked that he who had served ten years in the Caucasus would either become a confirmed drunkard, or would marry a dissolute woman. How terrible!' Indeed, they are afraid lest I should ruin myself, whereas it might have been my lot to have the great fortune of becoming the husband of Countess B——, a chamberlain, or a marshal of the nobility. How contemptible and pitiable you all appear to me! You do not know what happiness nor what life is! You have first to taste life in all its artless beauty; you must see and understand what I see before me each day: the eternal, inaccessible snows of the moun-

tains, and majestic woman in her pristine beauty, as the first woman must have issued from the hands of her Creator, — and then it will be clear who it is that is being ruined, and who lives according to the truth, you or I.

"If you only knew how detestable and pitiable you are to me in your delusions! The moment there rise before me, instead of my cabin, my forest, and my love, those drawing-rooms, those women with pomaded hair, through which the false locks appear, those unnaturally lisping lips, those concealed and distorted limbs, and that prattle of the drawing-rooms, which pretends to be conversation, but has no right to be called so, — an insufferable feeling of disgust comes over me. I see before me those dull faces, those rich, marriageable girls, with an expression on the face which says, 'That's all right, you may — Just come up to me, even though I am a rich, marriageable girl;' that sitting down and changing of places; that impudent pairing of people, and that never ending gossip and hypocrisy; those rules — to this one your hand, to that one a nod, and with that one a chat; and finally, that eternal ennui in the blood, which passes from generation to generation (and consciously at that, with the conviction of its necessity). You must understand, or believe it. You must see and grasp what truth and beauty are, and everything which you say and think, all your wishes for your own happiness and for mine, will be dispersed to the winds. Happiness consists in being with Nature, in seeing it, and holding converse with it. 'The Lord preserve him, but he will, no doubt, marry a Cossack woman, and will be entirely lost to society,' I imagine them saying about me, with genuine compassion, whereas it is precisely this that I wish: to be entirely lost, in your sense of the word, and to marry a simple Cossack woman; I dare not do it, because that would be the acme of happiness, of which I am unworthy.

"Three months have passed since I for the first time saw the Cossack maiden, Maryánka. The conceptions and prejudices of the society from which I had issued were still fresh in me. I did not believe then that I could fall in love with this woman. I admired her, as I admired the beauty of the mountains and of the sky, nor could I help admiring her, for she is as beautiful as they. Then I felt that the contemplation of this beauty had become a necessity of my life, and I began to ask myself whether I did not love her; but I did not find in myself anything resembling the feeling as I had imagined it to be. This sentiment resembled neither the longing for solitude, nor the desire for matrimony, nor platonic love, still less carnal love, which I had experienced. I had to see and hear her, to know that she was near, and I was not exactly happy, but calm. After an evening party, which I had attended with her, and at which I had touched her, I felt that between that woman and myself existed an indissoluble, though unacknowledged, bond, against which it would be vain to struggle. But I did struggle. I said to myself: 'Is it possible for me to love a woman who will never comprehend the spiritual interests of my life? Can I love a woman for her mere beauty, can I love a statue of a woman?' I asked myself, and I was loving her all the time, though I did not trust my own sentiment.

"After the party, when I had spoken to her for the first time, our relations were changed, Before that time she was to me a foreign, but majestic, object of external Nature; after the party, she became a human being for me. I have met her and spoken with her; and I have been with her father at work, and have passed whole evenings in their company. And in these close relations she has remained, to my thinking, just as pure, inaccessible, and majestic. To all questions she has always answered in the same calm, proud, and gaily indifferent

manner. At times she has been gracious, but for the most part every glance, every word, every motion of hers, has expressed the same, not contemptuous, but repressive and enticing indifference.

"Each day I tried, with a feigning smile on my lips, to dissemble, and, with the torment of passion and of desires in my heart, I spoke jestingly to her. But she saw that I was dissembling, and yet looked gaily and simply at me. This situation grew intolerable to me. I did not wish to lie before her, and wanted to tell her everything I thought and everything I felt. I was very much excited; that was in the vineyard. I began to tell her of my love, in words that I am ashamed to recall. I am ashamed to think of them, because I ought never to have dared to tell her that, and because she stood immeasurably above the words and above the feeling which I had intended to express to her. I grew silent, and since that day my situation has been insufferable. I did not wish to lower myself, by persisting in the former jocular relations, and I was conscious that I was not yet ripe for straightforward, simple relations with her. I asked myself in despair, 'What shall I do?'

"In my preposterous dreams I imagined her, now as my mistress, and now as my wife, and I repelled both thoughts in disgust. It would be terrible to make a mistress of her. It would be a murder. And it would be still worse to make a lady of her, the wife of Dmítri Andréevich Olénin, as one of our officers has made a lady of a Cossack girl of this place, whom he has married. If I could turn Cossack, become a Lukáshka, steal herds of horses, fill myself with red wine, troll songs, kill people, and when drunk climb through the window to pass the night with her, without asking myself who I am and why I am, — it would be a different matter; then we could understand each other, and I might be happy.

"I tried to abandon myself to such a life, but it made

me only feel more strongly my weakness, my contorted existence. I could not forget myself and my composite, inharmonious, monstrous past. And my future presents itself to me still more disconsolately. Each day the distant snow-capped mountains and that majestic, happy woman are before me. But not for me is the only possible happiness in the world; not for me is this woman!

"Most terrible and sweetest to me, in my situation, was the consciousness that I understood her, while she would never understand me. She will not understand me, not because she stands below me, but she never ought to understand me. She is happy; she is like Nature, — even, calm, and herself. But I, weak, contorted creature, want her to understand my unnaturalness and my suffering.

"I have passed sleepless nights, and aimlessly stood under her windows, without giving myself an account of what was going on within me. On the 18th, our company was called out to make an incursion. I passed three days outside the village. I was melancholy, and nothing interested me. The songs, the card-playing, the drinking bouts, the conversations about rewards in the detachment, were more loathsome to me than ever. I returned home to-day; I saw her, my cabin, Uncle Eróshka, and the snow-capped mountains from my porch, and I was seized by such a strong and novel feeling of joy, that I understood everything. I love that woman with a real love; I love for the first and only time in my life. I know what the matter with me is. I am not afraid to lower myself through my sentiment, am not ashamed of my love, but proud of it.

"It is not my fault that I have fallen in love. It happened against my will. I took refuge from my love in self-renunciation; I made myself believe that I took delight in the love of the Cossack Lukáshka for Maryánka, and I only fanned my love and my jealousy. This is not

an ideal, a so-called exalted love, which I had experienced heretofore; not that feeling of transport, when a person contemplates his love, feels within him the source of his sentiment, and does everything himself. I have experienced that also. This is even less a desire for enjoyment, — it is something else. Maybe in her I love Nature, the personification of everything beautiful in Nature; but I have not my own will, and through me an elementary force loves her, and the whole world, all Nature, impresses this love upon my soul, and says to me, 'Love!' I love her not with my mind, not with my imagination, but with my whole being. Loving her, I feel myself an inseparable part of the whole blissful world of the Lord.

"I have written you before about my new convictions, which I had carried away from my solitary life; but nobody can know with what labour they were worked out within me, with what delight I hailed them, and how happy I was to see the new path of life open to me. There was nothing more precious to me than these convictions — Well — love came, and they are gone, and not even the regrets for them are left! It is even difficult for me to grasp how I could have been carried away by such a cold, one-sided, mental mood. Beauty came, and all the monumental labour of the mind is scattered to the winds. I have not even any regrets for what has passed away!

"Self-renunciation is nonsense, wild rambling. It is nothing but pride, a refuge from a well-deserved misfortune, a salvation from envying another's happiness. To live for others, to do good! Wherefore? When my soul is filled with the one love of myself, and with the one desire to love her, and live with her, to live her life. I now wish happiness, not for others, not for Lukáshka. Now I do not love these others. Formerly I should have said that this is bad. I should have tormented myself

with the questions, 'What will become of her, of me, of Lukáshka?' Now it is all the same to me. I live not in myself, but there is something stronger than myself that guides me. I suffer; but formerly I was dead, and now only I live. I will call on them to-day, and will tell her everything."

XXXIV.

Having finished the letter, Olénin went late in the evening to the ensign's cabin. The old woman was sitting on a bench behind the oven, unravelling cocoons. Maryánka, with bared head, was sewing by candle-light. When she saw Olénin, she sprang up, took her kerchief, and went up to the oven.

"Stay with us, Maryánushka," said her mother.

"No, I am bareheaded." And she leaped upon the oven.

Olénin saw only her knees and her shapely legs that were hanging down. He treated the old woman to tea, and she treated her guest to boiled cream, for which she sent Maryánka. Having placed the plate on the table, Maryánka again leaped upon the oven, and Olénin was conscious only of her glance. They were speaking of house matters. Mother Ulítka unbosomed herself, and was in a mood of hospitality. She brought Olénin grape preserves, grape cake, and the best wine, and she began to treat him with that peculiar, plebeian, coarse, and proud hospitality which is found only among people who earn their bread by physical labour. The old woman, who at first had impressed Olénin with her coarseness, now frequently touched him by her simple tenderness in relation to her daughter.

"We need not complain, dear sir! We have everything, thank God! We have pressed some wine, and have preserved some, and we shall be able to sell three

barrels or more of grapes, and there will be enough left to drink. Don't be in a hurry to leave us! We will have you celebrate with us at the wedding."

"When will the wedding be?" asked Olénin, feeling all his blood rush to his face, and his heart beating with an uneven and painful motion.

There was a stir behind the oven, and the cracking of pumpkin seeds was heard.

"Well, we ought to celebrate it next week. We are ready," replied the old woman, in a quiet, straightforward manner, as though Olénin were not there, or had never existed. "I have got everything together for Maryánushka. We will give her a nice trousseau. Only this is bad: our Lukáshka has been a little wild of late. He is carrying on too much! He is wild! The other day a Cossack returned from the company, and told us that Lukáshka had been to the Nogáy country."

"He might get caught," said Olénin.

"That's what I say: 'You, Lukáshka, don't be so wild!' Of course, he is a young fellow, and he wants to show off. But there is a time for everything. Well, suppose he has driven off some cattle, has stolen, has killed an abrék, — a fine fellow! It is time to live a peaceable life; but this will not do."

"Yes, I saw him once or twice at the front, — he is taking it easy. And then he has sold his horse," said Olénin, glancing at the oven.

A pair of large black eyes gleamed at him sternly and malevolently. He was sorry for what he had said.

"Well! He is doing no one any harm," suddenly said Maryánka. "He is celebrating with his own money," and letting down her feet, she leaped from the oven and went out, slamming the door.

Olénin followed her out with his eyes; then he looked out into the yard, and waited, not listening to what Mother Ulítka was telling him. A few minutes later

guests entered: an old man, Mother Ulítka's brother, Uncle Eróshka, and soon after, Maryánka, with Ústenka.

"Good evening," Ústenka squeaked. "Are you still celebrating?" she said, turning to Olénin.

"Yes, I am," he answered, and for some reason he felt ashamed and ill at ease.

He wanted to go away, and could not. Equally, it seemed impossible to him to keep silent. The old man helped him out: he asked for something to drink, and they drank together. Then Olénin had some wine with Eróshka. Then with the other Cossack. Then again with Eróshka. And the more he drank, the heavier his heart felt. The old men drank without cessation. The two girls climbed on the oven, where they giggled, looking at the men, who drank until late into the night. Olénin did not speak, but drank more than the rest. The Cossacks were getting noisy. The old woman told them to go, and refused to give them more wine. The girls made fun of Uncle Eróshka; it was ten o'clock when they all went out on the porch. The old men invited themselves to end the night in a drinking bout at Olénin's. Ústenka ran away home. Eróshka took the Cossack over to Vanyúsha. The old woman went to straighten out things in the dairy. Maryánka was left alone in the room. Olénin felt fresh and brisk, as though he had just awakened. He took in the situation, and, letting the old men go ahead, returned to the room. Maryánka was getting ready to go to sleep. He went up to her, and wished to say something to her, but his voice broke. She sat down on her bed, drew her feet under her, moved away from him into the corner, and looked at him in silence, with a terrified, wild glance. She was evidently afraid of him. Olénin felt it. He was both sorry and ashamed, but, at the same time, felt a proud pleasure for having evoked in her this feeling, if no other.

"Maryánka!" he said. "Will you never have pity on me? I can't tell you how I love you."

She moved away still farther.

"It is the wine that is speaking in you. You will get nothing!"

"No, not the wine. Do not marry Lukáshka! I will marry you."

"What am I saying?" he thought, as he pronounced those words. "Will I tell her this to-morrow? I will, I certainly will, and I will repeat it now," an inner voice answered him.

"Will you marry me?"

She looked at him earnestly, and her fear seemed to have left her.

"Maryánka! I shall lose my reason. I am beside myself. I will do whatever you tell me to," and senselessly tender words flowed of their own accord.

"Don't talk such rubbish!" she interrupted him, suddenly seizing his hand which he had stretched out to her. She did not push it away, but gripped it tightly between her strong, rough fingers. "Do gentlemen marry Cossack girls? Go!"

"Will you marry me? I will —"

"And what shall we do with Lukáshka?" she said, smiling.

He tore his hand, which she was holding, out of hers, and firmly clasped her youthful body. But she jumped up like a deer, leaped down with her bare feet, and ran out on the porch. Olénin came to his senses, and was horror-struck at himself. Again he appeared to himself inexpressibly detestable in comparison with her. But, without repenting for a moment what he had said, he went home, and, without paying any attention to the carousing old men, lay down, and slept a sound sleep, such as he had not slept for a long time.

XXXV.

THE next day was a holiday. In the evening all the people were in the street displaying their gala attire in the setting sun. More wine than usual had been pressed. The people were through with the harvest. The Cossacks were preparing themselves to leave for an expedition within a month, and many families were getting ready to celebrate weddings.

In the square, in front of the village office, and near two shops, in one of which sweetmeats and pumpkin and melon seeds were sold, and in the other kerchiefs and calico, stood the largest groups. On the mound of the village office stood and sat old men, in simple gray and black coats, without galloons and adornments. The old men were discussing, in quiet, measured voices, the crops and the young children, the village affairs and the olden times, sternly and indifferently looking down upon the younger generation. The women and girls, passing by them, stopped for a moment and lowered their heads. The young Cossacks deferentially shortened their steps, and, doffing their caps, held them for awhile before their heads. The old men grew silent. They surveyed the passers-by, now sternly, now kindly, and deliberately took off their caps and put them on again.

The Cossack women had not yet begun to lead the *khorovód*, but, gathering in groups, in their brightly coloured half-coats and white kerchiefs, which covered their heads down to the eyes, sat on the ground and on the mounds, in the shade formed by the slanting rays, and

chattered and laughed with their ringing voices. The boys and girls played ball, whirling it high up into the air, and, shouting and piping, ran about the square. The half-grown girls at the other end of the square were already leading the *khorovód*, and singing a song in their shrill, timid voices. The scribes, the exempt from service, and the young lads who had come home for the holidays, in white gala mantles and in new red ones embroidered with galloons, with merry holiday faces, walked hand in hand, in groups of two and three, from one circle of women and girls to another, and, stopping, jested and played with the Cossack maidens.

An Armenian shopkeeper, in a blue mantle of fine cloth with galloons, was standing at the open door, through which could be seen shelves with rolled up coloured kerchiefs, and, with the pride of an Eastern merchant and the consciousness of his importance, was waiting for customers. Two red-bearded, barefooted Chechéns, who had come from across the Térek to enjoy the holiday, were sitting on their heels near the house of their acquaintance, and, carelessly smoking their little pipes and continually spitting out, were exchanging rapid guttural sounds, as they were watching the people. Now and then a soldier in an old week-day overcoat hurriedly passed between the variegated groups of the square. Here and there were heard the drunken songs of Cossacks going on a spree.

All the cabins were closed up, and the porches had been washed the evening before. Even the old women were in the streets. Along the roads shells of melon and pumpkin seeds were lying everywhere in the dust. The air was warm and motionless, the clear sky was blue and transparent. The dull white crests of the mountains which could be seen behind the roofs looked as though within a short distance, and as though they were tinged pink by the rays of the declining sun. Occasionally, the distant din of a cannon could be heard from across the river.

But over the village were borne the varied gay holiday sounds, mingling into one.

Olénin had been pacing the yard all the morning, in the hope of seeing Maryánka. But she had gone to mass in the chapel soon after having dressed herself; then she sat on a mound with the girls, cracking seeds, or with her companions ran into the house, casting merry and kind glances upon the lodger. Olénin was afraid to speak jestingly to her, especially before others. He was waiting for another such moment as on the previous evening; but that moment did not present itself, and he felt it to be above his strength to remain any longer in that uncertain situation. She again came out into the street, and a little while later he himself followed her, not knowing whither. He passed by the corner where she was seated, gleaming in her blue velvet half-coat, and with pain in his heart he heard the girls' laughter behind him.

Byelétski's cabin was near the square. As he went past it, he heard Byelétski's voice, "Come in!" and he walked in.

After a short chat, they sat down at the window. Soon after they were joined by Eróshka in a new half-coat, who sat down on the floor near them.

"That over yonder is an aristocratic group," said Byelétski, pointing with his cigarette to a variegated crowd on the corner, and smiling. "Mine is there, too, in a new red dress, you see. Why don't the *khorovóds* begin?" exclaimed Byelétski, looking out of the window. "Just wait! As soon as it is dark, we will go out ourselves. Then we will call them to Ústenka's. We must give them a party."

"I will come to Ústenka's, too," said Olénin, resolutely. "Will Maryánka be there?"

"She will. Do come!" said Byelétski, not in the least surprised. "Now, this is really very beautiful," he added, pointing to the variegated crowds.

"Yes, very!" Olénin agreed with him, endeavouring to appear indifferent. "On such holidays," he added, "I am always wondering what it is that makes the people suddenly content and gay, simply because there happens to be such and such a date. The holiday is on everything. Their eyes, and faces, and voices, and motions, and clothes, and the air and sun, — everything has a holiday appearance. We are past our holidays."

"Yes," said Byelétski, who was not fond of such reflections.

"Well, why don't you drink, old man?" he turned to Eróshka.

Eróshka winked to Olénin, as much as to say, "Yes, your chum is a proud fellow!"

Byelétski raised his glass.

"*Allah birdy*," he said, and emptied it. (*Allah birdy* means "God has given!" It is a customary salutation of the mountaineers when they drink together.)

"*Sau bul* (May you be well)," said Eróshka, smiling, and gulping down his glass.

"You say it is a holiday!" he said to Olénin, rising and looking through the window. "This is not much of a holiday! You ought to have seen them celebrate in days gone by! The women used to come out all dressed up in sleeveless cloaks embroidered with galloons. The breast would be festooned with gold lace in two rows. On their heads they wore gold-laced hats. As they walked past, they raised such a noise! Each woman was a princess. They used to go out, a whole bevy of them, and sing songs enough to deafen you; they would celebrate all night long. And the Cossacks would roll out kegs into the yards, and sit down and drink until daybreak; or they would take each other's hands and start on a rush through the village. Whomsoever they met on their way, they would take with them, and so they would go from house to house. Many a time they would celebrate three

days in succession. I remember how father used to come home, red and puffed up, without his cap or anything, and throw himself down on the bed. Mother knew what to do: she would bring him some fresh caviar and red wine to sober him up with, and herself would run through the village to look for his cap. Then he would sleep for two days at a time! That is the kind of people they were then! But how is it to-day?"

"Well, how about the girls in their sleeveless cloaks? Did they keep by themselves?" asked Byelétski.

"Yes, by themselves! Then the Cossacks would come, on foot or on horseback, and 'Let us break up their *khorovóds!*' they would say, and the girls would take up oak cudgels. In the Butter-week a young fellow would come dashing along in such a manner, and they would strike out, and beat his horse, and him. But he would break through the wall, and carry off the one he liked best. And his sweetheart would love him to his heart's content. Oh, what girls, what queenly girls they were!"

XXXVI.

Just then two men on horseback rode up from a side street. One of them was Nazárka, the other Lukáshka. Lukáshka was sitting a little to one side on his well-fed bay Kabardá horse, which stepped lightly on the rough road, and swayed his beautiful head with his shining, delicate withers. The well-adjusted gun in the case, the pistol at his back, and the military mantle rolled up behind the saddle, proved that Lukáshka had not arrived from a peaceful, or near-by place. In his sidewise foppish pose, in the careless motion of his hand, with which he almost inaudibly cracked his whip under the horse's belly, and particularly in his glistening black eyes, with which he, proudly blinking, surveyed everything about him, were expressed the consciousness of strength and the self-confidence of youth. "Have you seen the dashing fellow?" his eyes, glancing around him, seemed to say. His shapely horse, the harness and the weapons with silver trimmings, and the handsome Cossack himself, attracted the attention of all the people who were gathered in the square. Nazárka, spare and undersized, was dressed much worse than Lukáshka. Passing by the old men, Lukáshka checked his horse, and raised his white curly cap above his clipped black hair.

"Well, have you driven off many Nogáy horses?" said a haggard old man, with a frowning, gloomy look.

"Have you been counting them, grandfather, that you are asking about it?" replied Lukáshka, turning away.

"You are not doing well to take the chap with you," said the old man, more gloomily still.

"See, the devil, he knows everything!" Lukáshka said, under his breath, and his face assumed a careworn expression; but glancing into the corner where a number of Cossack girls were standing, he wheeled his horse around toward them.

"Good day, girls!" he shouted, in his strong, ringing voice, and suddenly checked in his horse. "You have grown old without me, hags!" and he burst out laughing.

"Good day, Lukáshka, good day, brother!" were heard their merry voices. "Have you brought much money with you? Buy the girls some sweetmeats! How long are you going to stay? We have not seen you for a long time."

"Nazárka and I have run down for the night, to celebrate," answered Lukáshka, cracking his whip over the horse, and riding into the throng of girls.

"Why, Maryánka has entirely forgotten about you," shrieked Ústenka, nudging Maryánka with her elbow, and bursting forth into a small laugh.

Maryánka moved back from the horse, and, thrusting back her head, calmly gazed at the Cossack with her large sparkling eyes.

"You have not been here for a long time! Stop crushing us with your horse!" she said, dryly, and turned away.

Lukáshka was evidently in a very happy frame of mind. His face shone with daring and joy. Maryánka's cold answer obviously startled him. He suddenly scowled.

"Get up on the stirrups, and I will take you into the mountains, my dear!" he suddenly cried, as though to dispel his unpleasant thoughts, and began to make all kinds of daring evolutions among the girls. He bent down to Maryánka. "I will kiss you, I will kiss you hard!"

Maryánka's eyes and his met, and she suddenly blushed. She stepped aside.

"Stop it! You are going to crush our feet!" she said, and, lowering her head, looked at her shapely feet that were clad in blue stockings with clocks, and in new red shoes, bordered with narrow silver galloons.

Lukáshka turned to Ústenka, and Maryánka sat down alongside a Cossack woman holding a babe in her arms. The child stretched its hands out toward Maryánka, and with its plump little hand seized a thread of the necklace which was hanging down her blue half-coat. Maryánka bent down to the child, and looked askance at Lukáshka. In the meantime Lukáshka fetched out from the pocket of his black half-coat, beneath his mantle, a small bundle of sweetmeats and seeds.

"I offer it to the whole crowd," he said, handing the bundle to Ústenka, and smilingly gazing at Maryánka.

There was again an expression of perplexity in the girl's face. Her beautiful eyes looked dim, as though covered with a mist. She lowered the kerchief below her lips, and, suddenly burying her head in the white face of the babe holding her necklace, began to kiss it eagerly. The child pressed its tiny hands against the girl's swelling bosom and cried, opening its toothless mouth.

"You are choking the baby," said the child's mother, taking it away and opening her half-coat, in order to give it the breast. "You had better chat with the young lad."

"As soon as I have housed the horse, I will be back with Nazárka, to carouse all night," said Lukáshka, striking the horse with the whip, and riding away from the girls.

Having turned, together with Nazárka, into a side street, they rode up to two cabins standing in a row.

"So here we are, brother! Come soon!" Lukáshka cried to his companion, dismounting at the neighbouring

yard, and leading his own horse through the wicker gate of his own courtyard. "Good evening, Stépka!" he turned to the dumb girl, who herself was dressed in holiday attire, and was coming in from the street to take the horse from him. He made signs to her to give the horse some hay, and not to unsaddle him.

The dumb girl made some inarticulate sounds, smacked her lips, pointed to the horse, and kissed his nose. That meant that she liked the horse, and that it was a fine steed.

"Good evening, mother! Have you not yet been out in the street?" cried Lukáshka, holding his gun and walking up the steps.

His old mother opened the door for him.

"Now, I did not expect you, nor hope for you to come," said the old woman. "Kírka told me you would not be here."

"Let me have a little red wine, mother! Nazárka will come to see me, and we will drink in honour of the holiday."

"Directly, Lukáshka, directly," answered the old woman. "Our women-folk are out strolling. I think our dumb girl has gone out, too."

She picked up her keys and hastened out into the dairy.

Having stabled his horse and taken off his gun, Nazárka went over to Lukáshka's.

XXXVII.

"To your health," said Lukáshka, receiving from his mother a full cup of wine, and cautiously taking it over to Nazárka, who sat with drooping head.

"I declare," said Nazárka, "you heard Grandfather Clodhopper ask, 'Have you stolen many horses?' He evidently knows."

"Wizard!" was Lukáshka's curt reply. "What of it?" he added, shaking his head. "They are now beyond the river. Go and find them!"

"Still it is not good."

"What is not good? Take some wine to him to-morrow! That's what we have to do, and that will be the end of it. Now for the spree! Drink!" shouted Lukáshka, in the same voice in which old Eróshka pronounced this word. "We will go out to celebrate in the street, with the girls. You go down and fetch some honey, or I will send the dumb girl for it. We will celebrate until morning."

Nazárka smiled.

"Well, shall we stay here long?" he asked.

"Let us first have a good time! Run for some brandy! Here is money!"

Nazárka obediently ran over to Yámka's.

Uncle Eróshka and Ergushóv, having scented a spree, like some birds of prey, fell, both drunk, one after the other, into the hut.

"Let me have another half-bucket!" shouted Lukáshka to his mother, in reply to their salutation.

"Now, tell me, you devil, where did you steal?" shouted Uncle Eróshka. "You are a fine fellow! I love you!"

"Yes, you love me," answered Lukáshka, laughing. "You are carrying sweetmeats from yunkers to girls. What do you say, old man?"

"It is a lie, yes, it is a lie! Oh, Márka!" The old man burst out laughing. "How that devil did beg me! 'Go,' says he, 'and try for me!' He offered me a fowling-piece. No, God be with him! I would have done it, but I was sorry for you. Now, tell me, where have you been?" And the old man started speaking in Tartar.

Lukáshka answered him briskly.

Ergushóv, who did not understand Tartar well, now and then threw in a few words in Russian.

"I say, he has driven off some horses. I know for sure," he affirmed.

"Giréyka and I rode out together," Lukáshka began to tell. His using the diminutive Giréyka for Giréy-khan heightened his dash to the Cossack's thinking. "On the other side of the river he boasted of knowing the whole steppe, and he said he would take me there straight; but when we rode out it was dark night, and my Giréyka got all mixed up; he began to sniff about, and could not make out anything. He could not find the native village, and that was the end of it. We had obviously gone too much to the right. I suppose we must have wandered about until midnight. And then luckily the dogs began to howl."

"Fools," said Uncle Eróshka. "We used to get lost that way in the steppe. The devil can make them out! Then I would ride on some mound, and howl like a wolf, like this!" He folded his hands over his mouth, and howled like a pack of wolves, in one long note. "The dogs would always reply. Go, tell the rest! Well, did you find it?"

"We at once took to putting the halters on the horses. Nogáy women caught Nazárka, bah!"

"Yes, they did," said Nazárka, who had just returned; he spoke as though he were offended.

"We rode ahead, and again Giréyka lost his way; he took us straight to the sand dunes. He kept saying that we were riding in the direction of the Térek, when we were going quite the opposite way."

"You ought to have watched the stars," said Uncle Eróshka.

"That's what I say," Ergushóv chimed in.

"But, I tell you it was dreadfully dark. I groped about and about! I put the halter on one mare, and gave my own horse the rein. I thought he would take me the right way. What do you think he did? He just snorted, and put his nose to the ground. He dashed forward, and brought me straight to the village. And in the meantime it had grown light; we had barely time to hide them in the woods. Nagím came from across the river, and took them away."

Ergushóv shook his head. "That's what I say: it was clever. How many did you get?"

"They are all here," said Lukáshka, striking his pocket with his hand.

Just then the old woman entered the room.

"Drink!" he shouted.

"Once Girchík and I went out late —" began Eróshka.

"Well, there will be no end to your story," said Lukáshka. "But I will go." Emptying his wine-bowl and tightening his belt, Lukáshka went out into the street.

XXXVIII.

It was late when Lukáshka walked out into the street. The autumnal night was fresh and windless. The full golden moon swam out from behind the black poplars that towered on one side of the square. A smoke rose from the chimneys of the dairies, and, mingling with the mist, spread over the village. Here and there a light could be seen in the windows. The odour of the dung chips, of the young wine, and of the mist was borne through the air. The chatting, the laughter, the songs, and the cracking of seeds sounded just as mixed, but more distinct than in the daytime. White kerchiefs and lambskin caps could be seen in small groups in the darkness, along the fences and the houses.

In the square, opposite the opened and illuminated door of the shop, were assembled throngs of Cossacks and girls, looking now black, now white, and there could be heard loud songs, laughter, and chattering. Taking hold of each other's hands, the girls were circling around, tripping gracefully in the dusty square. A haggard and very homely girl sang out:

"Out of the forest, the little dark forest,
Ay da lyuli!
Out of the garden, the little green garden,
There walked out, came out two fine fellows,
Two fine fellows, and both of them unmarried.
They walked out, came out, and stood still,
They stood still, began to quarrel.
Forth came to them a fair maiden,
Came out to them, and spoke to them:

'Now, to one of you I shall be given.'
She was given to the fair-faced lad,
The fair-faced lad, the fair-haired one.
He took her, took her by her right hand,
He led her, led her, all around the circle,
And he boasted to all his companions:
'Behold, brothers, the wife I have!' "

The old women stood around and listened to the songs. The boys and young girls flitted about in the darkness, trying to catch each other. The Cossacks stood near by, teasing the girls as they passed, and occasionally breaking through the *khorovód*, and walking inside the circle. On the dark side of the door stood Byelétski and Olénin, in mantles and lambskin caps, and conversed with each other, not in the Cossack dialect, nor aloud, but audibly enough, and they were conscious of attracting attention. Plump Ústenka, in red half-coat, and the majestic figure of Maryánka, in her new shirt and half-coat, were neighbours in the *khorovód*. Olénin was discussing with Byelétski how to get Maryánka and Ústenka away from the *khorovód*. Byelétski surmised that Olénin wanted to have some amusement, but Olénin was hoping to have his lot decided. He wanted to see Maryánka by herself that evening, cost what it might, to tell her everything, and to ask her whether she could and would become his wife. Although the question had long ago been answered in the negative, he hoped that he would be able to tell her everything he felt, and that she would understand him.

"Why did you not tell me before?" said Byelétski. "I would have arranged it for you through Ústenka. You are so strange!"

"What's to be done? Some day, very soon, I will tell you everything. But now, for God's sake, arrange it so that she will come to Ústenka's."

"Very well. That is easy. So the fair-faced lad will get you, and not Lukáshka?" said Byelétski, for propri-

ety's sake turning first to Maryánka; but, without waiting for an answer, he went up to Ústenka, and began to ask her to bring Maryánka with her. He had hardly finished speaking, when the leader started another song, and the girls drew each other around the circle.

They sang:

"Behind the garden, behind the garden,
A fellow, her to meet,
Walked up and down the street.
The first time he walked,
His right hand did he flap;
The second time he walked,
He waved his beaver cap;
But the third time he walked,
He stopped in front of her,
Stopped in front of her, went over to her.
'I was going to see thee,
Angrily to thee to talk:
Why didst thou not, dear maid,
Come in the garden for to walk?
Or art thou, my darling maid,
Much too proud for me?
Afterward, my darling maid,
Will I settle thee.
I will send the wooers to thee,
I will sue for thee:
You will surely be my wife,
And will weep through me.'

"Though I knew what to say,
I did not dare to answer 'Nay!'
I did not dare to answer 'Nay!'
To the garden I did wend,
And saluted there my friend.
'Here this kerchief take from me!
'Tis a gift, my dear, for thee.
Into thy white hands 'tis laid, —
Take it from me, darling maid!
Into thy white hands, my dove, —
Give, oh, give me, dear, thy love!
Maid, I have not, as I live,
Other gifts to thee to give.

I shall give my sweetheart dear
Nothing but this kerchief here.
Take this kerchief, do take this, —
And my dear five times I'll kiss!'"

Lukáshka and Nazárka broke the *khorovód*, and walked in among the girls. Lukáshka accompanied the song with his shrill voice, and, waving his hands, walked around inside the circle. "Let one of you come out!" he said. The girls pushed Maryánka; but she would not go. Amidst the song could be heard a shrill laughter, blows, kisses, and whispers.

Passing by Olénin, Lukáshka graciously nodded his head to him.

"Dmítri Andréevich, did you come here to look at it?" he said.

"Yes," Olénin answered, resolutely and dryly.

Byelétski leaned down to Ústenka's ear, and said something to her. She wanted to reply, but did not get a chance; when she circled around the second time, she said:

"All right, we will come!"

"And Maryánka, too?"

Olénin bent down to Maryánka. "Will you come? Please do, if only for a minute. I want to talk with you."

"If the girls will go, I will."

"Will you tell me what I asked you about?" he asked, leaning over to her. "You are happy to-day."

She began to whirl around. He followed her.

"Will you tell me?"

"What?"

"What I asked you about two days ago," said Olénin, bending down to her ear. "Will you marry me?"

"I will tell you," she answered. "I will tell you this evening."

In the darkness her eyes flashed gaily and kindly at the young man.

He continued to walk with her. It was a pleasure for him to bend closer to her.

But Lukáshka, proceeding with his song, gave her hand a mighty jerk, and pulled her out into the middle of the *khorovód*. Olénin had just time to say, "Do come down to Ústenka's!" after which he walked back to his companion. The song was ended. Lukáshka wiped his lips, Maryánka did the same, and they kissed. "No, *five kisses*," said Lukáshka. Conversation, laughter, running, took the place of the even motion and the even sounds. Lukáshka, who seemed to have had a goodly portion of wine, began to distribute sweetmeats to the girls.

"I offer it to all," he said, with proud, tragicomical self-satisfaction. "And she who will pass her time with soldiers, let her get out of the *khorovód*," he suddenly added, looking maliciously at Olénin.

The girls grabbed his sweetmeats, and, laughing, took them away from each other. Byelétski and Olénin walked over to one side.

Lukáshka, as though embarrassed at his liberality, took off his cap and, wiping his brow with his sleeve, walked over to Maryánka and Ústenka.

"*Or art thou, my darling maid, much too proud for me?*" he repeated the words of the song which had just been sung, and, turning to Maryánka, "*Much too proud for me*," he repeated, angrily, once more. "*You will surely be my wife, and will weep through me*," he added, embracing Ústenka and Maryánka at once.

Ústenka tore herself loose, and, raising her hand, struck him such a blow on his back that it made her hand smart.

"Well, are you going to lead again?" he asked.

"As the girls wish," answered Ústenka, "but I am going home, and Maryánka wanted to come to our house, too."

"Don't go there, Maryánka!" he said. "We will pass our time together for the last time. Go home, and I will follow you."

"What should I do at home? This is what the holiday is for, to have a good time. I am going to Ústenka's," said Maryánka.

"I am going to marry you soon."

"Very well," said Maryánka. "We will see then."

"Well, will you go?" said Lukáshka, sternly, giving her a tight hug, and kissing her cheek.

"Stop! Don't bother me!" And Maryánka tore herself loose and walked away from him.

"Oh, girl, it will not be right," reproachfully said Lukáshka, stopping and shaking his head. "*You will weep through me,*" and, turning away from her, he shouted to the girls, "Sing a song, won't you?"

Maryánka seemed to be frightened and annoyed by what he had said. She stopped. "What will not be right?"

"That."

"What?"

"Your keeping company with the soldier, your lodger, and because you are not loving me any more."

"If I don't want to love you, I won't. You are not my father or mother. What do you want? I will love whom I please."

"Well, well!" said Lukáshka. "Only remember it!" He went up to the shop. "Girls!" he cried. "Why are you standing there? Sing another *khorovód.* Nazárka, go and fetch us some wine."

"Well, will they come?" Olénin asked Byelétski.

"They will, directly," answered Byelétski. "Come, we must get the entertainment ready."

XXXIX.

It was late in the night when Olénin left Byelétski's cabin, following directly after Maryánka and Ústenka. The girl's white kerchief could be discerned in the dark street. The golden moon was descending toward the steppe. A silvery mist hovered over the village. All was quiet; there were no lights; only the steps of the departing women could be heard. Olénin's heart beat strongly. His flushed face was refreshed in the damp air. He glanced at the sky, and at the cabin from which he had come; the light in it went out, and again he watched the retiring shadow of the women. The white kerchief disappeared in the mist. He felt terribly to be alone; he was so happy! He sprang down from the porch and ran after the girls.

"Come now! They might see you!" said Ústenka.

"That's all right!"

Olénin rushed up to Maryánka and embraced her.

Maryánka did not struggle.

"Have you not kissed her enough?" said Ústenka. "You will kiss her when you get married, but now you must wait."

"Good-bye, Maryánka! To-morrow I will call on your father, and will tell him myself. Don't say anything to him!"

"What should I say, anyway?" answered Maryánka.

The two girls started to run. Olénin walked by himself, trying to recall everything that had taken place. He had passed the whole evening all alone with her, behind

the oven. Ústenka did not leave the room for a minute, and passed her time with the girls and with Byelétski. Olénin had been talking with her in a whisper.

"Will you marry me?" he had asked her.

"You will deceive me! You will not take me," she had replied, gaily and calmly.

"But do you love me? Tell me, for God's sake!"

"Why should I not love you? You are not misshapen!" Maryánka had answered, laughing, and pressing his hand in her own rough hands. "What white, awfully white, hands you have, — just like curds," she had said.

"I am not jesting. Tell me, will you marry me?"

"Why should I not, if father is willing?"

"Remember, I shall lose my mind if you deceive me. To-morrow I will tell your parents; I will come to sue for you."

Maryánka had suddenly burst out laughing.

"What is the matter with you?"

"Nothing. It is so funny."

"Truly! I will buy a vineyard and a house, and will enrol myself as a Cossack —"

"Look out! You must not love any other women! I am cross when it comes to that —"

Olénin with delight repeated all these words in his imagination. At these recollections he now felt an anguish and now was breathless with happiness. He was depressed, because she had been as calm as ever while speaking with him. This new situation had, apparently, not agitated her in the least. She did not seem to believe him, and was not thinking of the future. It appeared to him that she was loving him only in the present, and that there was no future for her with him. But he was happy, because her words seemed to him to be the truth, and because she had consented to be his.

"Yes," he said to himself, "only then shall we understand each other when she is all mine. For such a love

there are no words, but life, a whole life, is needed. To-morrow everything will be cleared up. I cannot live thus any longer. To-morrow I will tell her father, Byelétski, and the whole village — "

Having previously passed two sleepless nights, and having drunk so much in celebrating the holiday, Lukáshka was at once taken off his feet, and remained at Yámka's, sleeping.

XL.

On the following day Olénin awoke earlier than usual. In the first moments of his awakening he had a clear recollection of what awaited him, and he joyfully remembered her kisses, the pressure of her rough hands, and her words, "What white hands you have!" He jumped up, and wanted to go at once to the ensign to sue for Maryánka's hand. The sun had not yet risen, and it seemed to Olénin that there was an uncommon commotion in the street: people were walking, riding, and talking. He threw over him his mantle and sprang out on the porch. The ensign's family was not yet up. Five Cossacks rode by, conversing noisily about something. They were preceded by Lukáshka, who rode his broad-shouldered Kabardá horse. The Cossacks were talking and shouting; it was impossible to make out what they were saying.

"Ride out to the upper post!" cried one.

"Saddle, and be up with us at once!" said another.

"It will be nearer to go by that gate."

"Nonsense!" cried Lukáshka. "We must go through the middle gate."

"From there it is nearer," said one of the Cossacks, dust-covered, and riding a sweaty horse. Lukáshka's face was flushed and swollen from the carousal of the night before; his cap was poised on the back of his head. He shouted in a commanding voice, as though he were the superior.

"What is up? Whither are you going?" asked

Olénin, finding it difficult to direct the Cossacks' attention to himself.

"We are going out to catch some abréks. They are sitting on the sand-dunes. We shall ride out at once, but we have not enough people with us."

The Cossacks, continuing to shout and to get ready, passed along the street. It occurred to Olénin that it would not be well if he did not go with them; besides, he thought he would return soon. He dressed himself, loaded his gun, jumped on his horse, which had been half-saddled by Vanyúsha, and caught up with the Cossacks as they were leaving the village. The Cossacks were standing around in a circle, hurrying to be off; they were pouring some red wine into a wooden bowl from a cask that had just been brought there, and, passing it around, were drinking for a propitious expedition. Among them was also a young foppish ensign, who happened to be in the village, and who had assumed the command of the nine Cossacks present. The Cossacks who had gathered there were of the rank and file, and though the ensign had the appearance of the leader of the expedition, they all obeyed only Lukáshka.

The Cossacks did not pay the least attention to Olénin. When they had all mounted their horses and started off, and Olénin, riding up to the ensign, began to inquire about the affair, the ensign, who usually was kindly disposed, looked down upon him from the height of his magnificence. With great difficulty Olénin managed to get some information from him. A patrol, which had been sent out to look for abréks, had discovered some mountaineers about eight versts from the village, on the dunes. The abréks were entrenched in a ditch, and threatened that they would not be taken alive. The under-officer, who was on the patrol with two more Cossacks, remained behind to keep watch on them, and had sent one of the Cossacks to the village to get reënforcement.

The sun had just begun to rise. About three versts from the village, the steppe stretched out on all sides, and nothing was to be seen but the monotonous, melancholy, dry plain, with the sand tracked by the cattle, with here and there some withered grass, with low reeds in the lowlands, with now and then barely perceptible paths, and with the Nogáy camps that were visible somewhere in the distance along the horizon. The absence of shade and the severe aspect of the locality were very striking.

The sun always rises and sets red in the steppe. The wind, when there is any, moves whole mountains of sand. When the air is calm, as it was on that morning, the quiet, which is broken by neither motion nor sound, is especially impressive. On that morning the steppe was calm and gloomy, even though the sun was up; the steppe was quite deserted, and the air was mellow. Not a breeze stirred. One could hear only the tramping and snorting of the horses; but even these sounds were feeble, and soon died away. The Cossacks generally rode in silence. Their weapons are always so adjusted that they shall neither clank nor clatter. A clattering weapon is the greatest disgrace to a Cossack. Two Cossacks from the village caught up with them on the road, and exchanged two or three words with them.

Lukáshka's horse either stumbled or caught his foot in the grass, and accelerated his steps. That is a bad omen with the Cossacks. The Cossacks looked around and immediately turned back their faces, trying not to pay any attention to the incident, which at that moment had a particular significance. Lukáshka pulled the reins, frowned severely, clinched his teeth, and cracked his whip overhead. The good Kabardá steed brought all his legs in motion, undecided which one to put down first, and as though desirous of rising on wings; but Lukáshka warmed him up with the whip over his plump flanks, then a second time, and a third, — and the Kabardá steed, showing

his teeth, raising his tail, and rearing on his hind legs, fell a few paces behind the other horses.

"Ah, that is a fine steed!" said the ensign.

His using the word "steed" for "horse" was meant as a special praise of the animal.

"A lion of a horse," affirmed one of the older Cossacks.

The Cossacks rode on in silence, now at a walk, now at a trot, and only that one incident interrupted for a moment the quiet and solemnity of the motion.

In the eight versts of their ride over the steppe, they met no signs of life but a Nogáy tent which, being placed on an ox-cart, was slowly moving about a verst away from them. It was a Nogáy who was moving with his family from one camping-ground to another. In a low, marshy place they met two Nogáy women with high cheek-bones, who, with wicker baskets on their backs, were collecting the dung of the cattle roving on the steppe, for fuel. The ensign, who spoke poor Kumýk, began to ask something of the Nogáy women; but they did not understand him, and glanced at each other, obviously terrified.

Lukáshka rode up, checked in his horse, briskly uttered the customary salutation, and the women were evidently reassured, and spoke with him as with their own.

"*Ay, ay, kop abrék!*" they said, pitifully, pointing in the direction in which the Cossacks were riding. Olénin understood that they were saying "Many abréks!"

Having never taken part in such an affair, and knowing of it only through Uncle Eróshka's recitals, Olénin did not wish to stay away from the Cossacks, but to see it all himself. He admired the Cossacks, watched and listened, and made his observations. Although he had taken with him his sabre and a loaded gun, he, noticing that the Cossacks were keeping aloof from him, decided not to take any part in the action, especially since his

courage, to his thinking, had been proved at the frontier, and chiefly because he was so happy now.

Suddenly a shot was heard in the distance.

The ensign was agitated and began to give orders to the Cossacks, how to separate, and from what side to approach them. But the Cossacks obviously did not pay the least attention to his commands, and listened only to what Lukáshka told them, and watched him only. In Lukáshka's face and whole figure was expressed calm and solemnity. He made his steed go at an amble, so that the other horses, that were going at a walk, fell behind, and, blinking, kept on looking into the distance.

"Here is one on horseback," he said, checking his horse, and falling in with the others.

Olénin gazed sharply, but could not see anything. The Cossacks soon distinguished two horsemen, and in a quiet walk rode up toward them.

"Are these the abréks?" asked Olénin.

The Cossacks did not reply to this question, which to them was foolish. The abréks would have been silly to cross on this side of the river with their horses.

"Brother Ródka is waving his hand to us, I think," said Lukáshka, pointing to the two men on horseback, who now could be clearly seen. "He is coming up to us."

Indeed, in a few minutes it became obvious that the men on horseback were the Cossacks of the patrol, and soon the under-officer rode up to Lukáshka.

XLI.

"Is it far?" was all Lukáshka asked.

At the same time a short report of a gun was heard within thirty paces. The under-officer smiled slightly.

"Our Gúrka is firing at them," he said, nodding his head in the direction of the report.

Having ridden a few more steps, they saw Gúrka sitting behind a sand-hill and loading his gun. To kill time, Gúrka kept on shooting at the abréks, who were sitting behind another sand-hill. A bullet whistled by from there.

The ensign was pale and confused. Lukáshka dismounted from his horse, turned him over to a Cossack, and walked over to Gúrka. Olénin did the same, and, bending down, followed him. No sooner had they reached the Cossack who was firing than two bullets whistled over their heads. Lukáshka smiled and, looking at Olénin, crouched down.

"They will kill you if you don't look out, Andréevich," he said. "You had better go away. You have no business here."

But Olénin was anxious to see the abréks.

He saw behind a mound, about two hundred paces from him, caps and guns. Suddenly a smoke appeared, and another bullet whizzed by. The abréks were sitting below the hill, in a swamp. Olénin was impressed by the place where they were entrenched. The spot was just like the rest of the steppe, but the fact that it was

occupied by the abréks somehow separated it from everything else and gave it a special significance. It appeared to him to be just the place for abréks to occupy. Lukáshka returned to his horse, and Olénin followed him.

"We must take the ox-cart with the hay," said Lukáshka, "or else they will kill us all. There, beyond a mound, stands the ox-cart with the hay."

The ensign listened to him, and the under-officer agreed with him. The hay-wagon was brought up, and the Cossacks, hiding behind it, began to spread the hay as a protection. Olénin rode out on a mound, from which everything could be seen. The hay-wagon moved ahead; the Cossacks pressed closely together back of it. The Cossacks moved forward; the Chechéns — there were nine of them — were sitting in a row, knee to knee, and did not shoot.

Everything was quiet. Suddenly on the side of the Chechéns rang out the strange sounds of a weird song, resembling the "*Ay dalalay*" of Uncle Eróshka. The Chechéns knew that there was no escape for them, and, to free themselves from the temptation of running away, they tied themselves together with leather straps, knee to knee, got their guns ready, and tuned the death-song.

The Cossacks came nearer and nearer to them with the hay-wagon, and Olénin expected to hear a fusilade any moment; but the calm was broken only by the weird song of the abréks. Suddenly the song was ended; there was heard a short report; a bullet struck against the cart-chain; Chechén curses and shouts rang out. One shot after another was fired, and one bullet after another struck the wagon. The Cossacks did not shoot, though they were within five steps of the Chechéns.

Another moment passed, and the Cossacks, shouting the war-cry, rushed out on both sides of the wagon. Lukáshka was in the lead. Olénin heard but a few shots fired, then crying and groaning. He saw smoke, and

blood, as he thought. He left his horse, and beside himself rushed up to the Cossacks. Terror shrouded his eyes. He could not make out anything, but he understood that everything was ended. Lukáshka, pale as a sheet, was holding a Chechén by his arm, and crying, "Don't kill him! I will take him alive!" The Chechén was the same red-haired fellow, the brother of the dead abrék, who had come to get his body. Lukáshka was twisting his arms. Suddenly the abrék tore himself loose and shot at him with his pistol. Lukáshka staggered and fell. On his abdomen appeared some blood. He jumped up, but again fell down, cursing in Russian and in Tartar. The blood on him and under him grew ever more abundant. The Cossacks walked over to him, and began to take off his belt. One of them, Nazárka, before helping him, was for quite awhile unable to sheathe his sabre, as he put it in the wrong way. The blade was all bloody.

The Chechéns, with their hair dyed red, and clipped moustaches, lay dead and hacked to pieces. Only one, the same that had shot Lukáshka, lay alive, though severely wounded. Like a wounded hawk, all drenched with blood (blood was flowing from his right eye), clinching his teeth, pale and gloomy, surveying everything with his large excited eyes, he sat on his heels, holding a dagger, and ready to defend himself again. The ensign walked over to him, and, pretending to make a circuit round him, with a rapid motion fired his pistol at his ear. The Chechén darted forward, but he fell before he could rise.

The Cossacks, out of breath, pulled the dead to one side, and took off their weapons. Each of these red-haired Chechéns was a man; each had his own peculiar features. Lukáshka was carried to the cart. He kept swearing in Russian and in Tartar.

"You are lying, I will choke you with my hands! You will not get away from my hands! *Anna seni!*"

he cried, making an effort to rush forward. Soon he grew silent from loss of blood.

Olénin rode home. In the evening he was told that Lukáshka was mortally wounded, but that a Tartar from across the river had undertaken to cure him.

The bodies were all dragged to the village office. Women and children ran there to see them.

Olénin returned home at dusk, and could not collect himself for a long time from the horrors which he had witnessed. In the evening the recollections of the day again burst upon him. Maryánka was going to and fro from the house to the shed, attending to her household duties. Her mother had gone to the vineyard. Her father was at the office. Olénin did not wait for her to get through with her work, and walked up to her. She was in the house, standing with her back to him. Olénin thought she was embarrassed.

"Maryánka," he said, "oh, Maryánka! May I come in?"

Suddenly she turned around. In her eyes stood barely perceptible tears. In her face was fair sorrow. She looked at him silently and majestically.

Olénin repeated:

"Maryánka! I have come —"

"Leave me," she said. Her face did not change, but tears gushed from her eyes.

"What is it about? What is the matter?"

"What?" she repeated, in a coarse and harsh voice. "Cossacks have been killed, that is the matter."

"Lukáshka?" asked Olénin.

"Go away! What do you want?"

"Maryánka!" said Olénin, walking over to her.

"Never will you get anything from me."

"Maryánka, don't say that," Olénin implored her.

"Go away! I am tired of you!" cried the girl, stamping her foot, and moving toward him with a threatening

mien. Her face expressed such disgust, contempt, and fury, that Olénin suddenly understood that he had nothing to hope for, and that what he had formerly thought of the unapproachability of this woman was an undeniable fact.

Olénin did not say anything, and ran out of the room.

XLII.

After returning home, he lay for two hours motionless on his bed; then he went to the captain, and asked for leave to visit the staff. He did not bid any one farewell, but sent his rent to the ensign through Vanyúsha, and got ready to journey to the fortress where the regiment was stationed. Only Uncle Eróshka saw him off. They drank together a glass, and then another, and then again. Just as upon his departure from Moscow, the stage three-span stood at the door. But Olénin did not cast his accounts with himself, as then, and did not say to himself that all he had been thinking and doing here was not that. He did not promise himself a new life. He loved Maryánka more than ever, and he knew that he could never be loved by her.

"Well, good-bye, my father!" said Uncle Eróshka. "If you ever take part in a campaign, be wiser, and listen to the advice of an old man. If you are out on an incursion, or wherever else it may be, — I am an old wolf, and have seen everything, — and there is some firing, don't go into a crowd where there are many people together. For it is the habit of you people, whenever you get scared, to jam together in a throng, thinking that it is merrier where there are a lot of you; but it is worse: the enemy always aims into a crowd. I always used to keep away from people, and to walk by myself, and so I have never been wounded. And I have seen a great deal in my lifetime."

"But you have a bullet in your back!" said Vanyúsha, who was cleaning up the room.

"The Cossacks did that while on a spree," replied Eróshka.

"The Cossacks? How so?" asked Olénin.

"Like this! They were drinking. Vánka Sítkin, a Cossack, was pretty drunk, and he took out his pistol, and bang! sent a bullet right into this spot."

"Did it pain you?" asked Olénin. "Vanyúsha, will you be done soon?" he added.

"Oh, in what a hurry you are! Let me tell you — He fired off; the bullet did not break my bone, but stopped right here. And so I told him: 'You have killed me, brother! Eh! What have you done to me? I will not let you off so easily. You will have to treat me to a bucket of wine.'"

"Well, did it hurt you?" again asked Olénin, scarcely hearing his story.

"Let me tell it to you. He put up the bucket. We drank together. And the blood was running all the time. I soiled the whole room with my blood. Then Grandfather Clodhopper said: 'The fellow will surely die. Let us have another stoup of sweet wine, or else we will have you in court.' They brought some more. And we filled ourselves up — "

"Well, did it hurt you?" again asked Olénin.

"Did it hurt? Don't interrupt me! I don't like that. Let me tell you the rest. We drank, and drank, and celebrated until morning, and I fell asleep on the oven, drunk. When I awoke in the morning, I could not unbend myself."

"Was it very painful?" repeated Olénin, thinking that now, at last, he would got an answer to his question.

"Did I tell you it hurt? It did not hurt, only I could not bend, nor walk."

"Well, and it healed up?" said Olénin, not even laughing, his heart was so heavy.

"Yes, but the bullet is still there. Just feel it!"

And he rolled up his shirt and showed his broad back, where a bullet was loosely encased near the bone.

"Do you see how it rolls around?" he said, evidently pleased with the bullet as with a toy. "Now it has rolled over to the back."

"Well, will Lukáshka live?" asked Olénin.

"God knows! There is no doctor here. They have gone for one."

"Where will they get one? At Gróznaya?" asked Olénin.

"No, my father, I would long ago have cut the throats of your Russian doctors, if I were the Tsar. All they know is to cut. They have spoiled our Cossack Bakláshev, by taking off his leg. Consequently they are fools. What is Bakláshev good for now? No, my father, in the mountains there are genuine doctors. During an expedition my friend Vorchík was wounded right here, in the chest, and your doctors gave him up, but Saíb came down from the mountains and cured him. They know all kinds of herbs, my father."

"Stop talking nonsense," said Olénin. "I had better send the surgeon from the staff."

"Nonsense?" the old man mimicked him. "Fool, fool! Nonsense! Send the surgeon! If your surgeons knew how to cure, the Cossacks and the Chechéns would go to get cured by them, whereas, your officers and colonels send for the doctors from the mountains. It is false, all false, with you people."

Olénin did not try to retort. He was too much of the opinion that everything was false in the world in which he used to live, and to which he was now going to return.

"How about Lukáshka? Have you seen him?" he asked.

"He is lying like one dead. He neither eats nor drinks. He won't stand anything but brandy. Well, he

is drinking brandy, — that's all right. I am sorry for the fellow. He was a good fellow, a brave, just like myself. I was once on the point of dying, and the women were howling, and howling. My head was hot. They already accounted me a saint. And so I was lying, and right above me, on the oven, tiny little drummers were sounding the reveille. I shouted to them, but they only drummed so much the harder." The old man laughed. "The women brought the chanter to me; they wanted to bury me, and so they said: 'He has led a worldly life, has kept company with women, has ruined souls, has eaten meat on fast-days, has played the balaláyka. Repent,' they said. And so I began to repent. 'I have sinned,' says I. No matter what the pope said, I repeated, 'I have sinned.' He began to ask me about the balaláyka. 'Where is it, that accursed thing?' says he. 'Let me have it, so I may smash it.' And I said I did not have it; but I had myself hidden it away in the dairy in a net. I knew they would not find it. And they gave me up. And I came to. And again I started to scrape the balaláyka — So, what was I saying?" he continued. "Take my advice, and keep away from crowds, or you will be killed. I am sorry for you, truly, I am. You are a toper, I like you. The rest of you fellows are fond of riding out to the mounds. There was one of them living here. He had come from Russia, and he had such a passion for mounds! Every time he saw a mound, he rode out to it. Once he galloped off. He galloped, and was so happy about it! And a Chechén shot at him, and killed him. The Chechéns are such fine shots with forked supports. There are better shots than I am. I do not like to see anybody killed in such a bad manner. I used to look at your soldiers, and wonder. What stupidity! My darlings walk together in a mass, and, besides, wear such red collars. How can one help hitting them? They kill one man, and while he is

dragged off, another man takes his place. What stupidity!" repeated the old man, shaking his head. "They ought to scatter, and walk one by one. And they ought to walk as if nothing were the matter. Then they would not find you out. That's the way it ought to be done."

"Well, good-bye, uncle! If God will grant it, we shall see each other again," said Olénin, rising and walking out to the vestibule.

The old man was sitting on the floor, and did not get up.

"Is this the way to say farewell? Fool, fool!" he said. "What people they are now! He has kept company with me, a whole year he has kept company, and now, 'Good-bye,' and off he goes. Don't you know, I love you, and am sorry for you? You are so gloomy, so lonely, such a lonely man! You are so shy! Many a time, when I could not sleep, have I thought of you, and felt sorry for you. As the song says:

"'Not so easy, my dear brother,
'Tis in foreign lands to live.'

And so it is with you."

"Well, good-bye," again said Olénin.

The old man got up and gave him his hand. Olénin pressed it, and wanted to leave.

"Your mug, your mug! Let me have it!"

The old man took him by the head with both his fat hands, kissed him three times with his wet moustache and lips, and began to weep.

"I love you, good-bye!"

Olénin seated himself in the vehicle.

"And so you are going! Give me, at least, a memento, my father! Give me a gun. What do you want two for?" said the old man, sobbing, and shedding real tears.

Olénin got the gun and gave it to him.

"What a lot of things you have given that old fellow!" grumbled Vanyúsha, "and it is still too little for him! Old beggar! What unreliable people!" he said, wrapping himself up in his overcoat, and taking his seat on the box.

"Shut up, swine!" cried the old man, laughing. "I declare, he is stingy!"

Maryánka came out of the shed, glanced indifferently at the tróyka, and, bowing, walked into the cabin.

"*La fille!*" said Vanyúsha, winking, and giving a dull laugh.

"Go," Olénin cried, angrily.

"Good-bye, father! Good-bye, I will remember you!" exclaimed Eróshka.

Olénin looked back. Uncle Eróshka was talking to Maryánka, apparently about his own affairs, and neither the old man nor the girl was looking at him.

SEVASTOPOL

In December, 1854, and in May and August, 1855

1854–1856

SEVASTOPOL

In December, 1854

THE dawn is just beginning to crimson the sky above Mount Sapún. The dark blue surface of the sea has cast off the nocturnal darkness, and is waiting for the first ray, in order to gleam forth in gay splendour. From the bay is wafted cold and mist; there is no snow, and everything is black, but the sharp morning frost pinches the face and crackles underfoot, and the distant, ceaseless roar of the sea, now and then interrupted by the booming of guns at Sevastopol, alone breaks the morning quiet. The ships are dark; eight bells are sounding.

On the Northern side the activity of the day slowly begins to replace the calm of the night. Here passes a patrol to relieve some sentinels, clanking their guns; there a surgeon is already hastening to the hospital; there a soldier has crept out of his earth hut and is washing his sunburnt face with ice-crusted water, and, turning to the ruddy east, and swiftly crossing himself, says his prayers; here a tall, heavy camel cart, with creaking wheels, is creeping to the cemetery to bury the blood-stained dead, with whom it is loaded almost to the top.

You walk down to the harbour. You are struck by a peculiar odour of coal, dung, dampness, and beef. A

thousand different objects, wood, meat, gabions, flour, iron, are lying in heaps on the quay. Soldiers of various regiments, with bags and guns, without bags and without guns, are crowding here, smoking, swearing, dragging heavy burdens to a steamboat which, puffing smoke, is lying near the landing. Private two-oared boats, filled with all kinds of people, — soldiers, sailors, merchants, women, — are landing or leaving the quay.

"To the Gráfskaya, your Honour? Please!" Two or three former sailors, getting out of their boats, are offering you their services.

You choose the one who is nearest to you, step across the half-decayed carcass of a chestnut horse, which is lying in the mud near the boat, and walk over to the stern. You push off from the shore. All around you is the sea, glittering in the morning sun; before you is an old sailor in a camel's-hair overcoat, and a fair-haired young boy, intently pulling at the oar in silence. You look at the outstretched masses of the ships scattered far and wide over the bay; at the diminutive black dots of the sloops moving on the brilliant azure of the sea; at the beautiful, bright structures of the city that may be discerned on the other side, tinged by the purple beams of the morning sun; at the foaming white line of the mole; at the submerged ships from which tower mournfully the black tops of masts; at the far-off hostile fleet shimmering on the crystal horizon of the ocean; at the frothing streaks, in which leap the briny bubbles raised by the oars; you hear the even sound of voices which reaches you over the water, and the majestic sounds of firing which, so you think, is growing louder in Sevastopol.

At the thought of being in Sevastopol, you are involuntarily stirred by a certain feeling of courage and pride, and your blood begins to course more rapidly in your veins.

"Your Honour! Make straight for *Kistentin*,"[1] the old sailor tells you, turning back in order to verify the direction which you are giving to the boat on the right of the rudder.

"She has still all her guns," remarks the fair-haired lad, passing by the vessel, and scrutinizing it.

"Why, of course. She is a new boat: Kornílov has been living on her," remarked the old man, also gazing at the vessel.

"I declare, it did burst!" says the boy, gazing, after a prolonged silence, at the white cloud of a dispersing smoke, which had suddenly appeared high over the southern bay, and which is accompanied by the sharp sound of an exploding bomb.

"He is firing to-day from the new battery," adds the old man, with equanimity spitting on his hand. "Come now, give way, Míshka, let us overtake the long-boat!" And your boat moves more rapidly ahead over the broadly billowing bay, really overtakes the heavy long-boat filled with some kind of bags, and unevenly propelled by awkward soldiers, and lands, among numerous craft alongside the shore, at the Gráfskaya quay.

On the shore move about noisily groups of soldiers in gray, sailors in black, and women in variegated attires. Women are selling rolls; Russian peasants with samovárs cry, "Hot sbiten;"[2] and right here on the very first steps lie in disorder rusty shells, bombs, canister-shot, and cast-iron cannon of various calibres. A little farther off is a large square, where are scattered huge beams, gun-carriages, sleeping soldiers; here stand horses, carts, green ordnance and caissons, and infantry scaffolding; there move about soldiers, sailors, officers, women, children, and merchants; there carts with hay, with bags, and with

[1] The steamer *Constantine*.

[2] A drink composed of hot water and honey. Sometimes capsicum and other spices are added.

barrels drive around, and occasionally a Cossack passes by, and an officer on horseback or a general in a vehicle, pass by.

On the right, the street is shut off by a barricade, in the embrasures of which are placed some small cannon, and near them sits a sailor, smoking his pipe. On the left is a beautiful house with Roman figures on the pediment, and beneath it stand soldiers and blood-stained litters, — everywhere you see the unpleasant signs of a military camp.

Your first impression is necessarily most disagreeable: the strange mixture of camp and city life, of the beautiful town and the dirty bivouac, is not only not beautiful, but even seems like vile disorder; and you imagine that everybody is frightened, that people are bustling around, not knowing what to do. But look more closely into the faces of the men who are moving about, and you will get a different impression. Look, for example, at this soldier of the baggage-train, who is taking a chestnut tróyka to the water, and who is calmly mumbling something to himself; it is evident that he will not lose his way in this motley crowd, which, indeed, does not exist for him, and that he is executing his work, whatever it may be, — to water horses or drag ordnance, — as calmly, and with the same self-confidence and indifference, as though all this were taking place at Túla or at Saránsk. The same expression you read in the countenance of this officer, who passes by you in immaculately white gloves, and in the countenance of the sailor, who is smoking while sitting on the barricade, and in the countenances of the busy soldiers, who with the litters are waiting at the steps of the former Assembly House, and in the countenance of this maiden, who, fearing to soil her pink dress, trips from stone to stone across the street.

Yes, you will certainly be disappointed when you first enter Sevastopol. In vain will you look in one single

face for traces of flurry and confusion, or even of enthusiasm, readiness to die, and determination. There is nothing of that. You see every-day people quietly occupied with every-day affairs, so that you will, no doubt, reproach yourself for your superabundant transport, and will be inclined to question the justness of the conception which you have formed about the heroism of the defenders of Sevastopol, from stories and from description, and from the aspect of things and from the sounds on the Northern side. But, before expressing your doubt, walk down to the bastions, take a look at the defenders of Sevastopol in the very place of the defence, or, still better, walk into the house opposite, which used to be the Assembly House of the Sevastopol nobility, and at the entrance of which the soldiers are standing with the litters, — and you will there see the defenders of Sevastopol; you will there see terrible and sad, great and amusing, but surprising and exalting spectacles.

You walk into the great assembly hall. You barely open the door, and you are at once impressed by the sight and odour of forty or fifty patients who are severely wounded or have suffered amputation, some on cots, but most on the floor. Do not trust your feeling which holds you back on the threshold of the hall, — it is a wrong feeling; walk on, and have no shame, as though you had come to look at the sufferers. Do not be ashamed to walk up and talk to them: the unfortunate like to see a sympathetic human face, like to tell of their sufferings, and to hear the words of love and sympathy. You pass along the aisle between the beds, and select a less severe and agonized face, and you take heart and walk over to talk with him.

"On what part of the body are you wounded?" you irresolutely and timidly ask an old, haggard soldier, who, sitting up on his cot, follows you with his good-natured glance, and almost invites you to come over to him. I

say "you ask timidly," because their sufferings, in addition to your sympathy, inspire you with a dread of offending, and with a deep respect for him who is bearing the suffering.

"In my leg," answers the soldier; but you immediately notice by the folds of the coverlet that he has lost his leg above the knee. "Thank God now," he adds, "I want to be discharged."

"How long ago were you wounded?"

"This is the sixth week, sir!"

"Does it still hurt?"

"No, it does not; only in bad weather I have a kind of pain in the thigh, that's all."

"How did you come to be wounded?"

"In the fifth *baksion*, sir, during the first *bardment*. I had trained my cannon, and was moving like this toward the second embrasure, when he struck me in the leg, and I felt as though I had stepped into a ditch. I looked down, and saw my leg was gone."

"Did it really not pain you at first?"

"No; only it felt as though some one had stuck something hot into my leg."

"And later?"

"And later it did not hurt either; only when they began to stretch the skin, there was a little itching. The main thing, sir, is not to think: if you don't think you are all right. People generally suffer because they think."

Just then a woman in a gray striped dress and wrapped in a black kerchief walks over to you. She takes part in your conversation with a sailor, and begins to tell you about him, about his suffering, about the desperate condition in which he was for four weeks, and how, after he was wounded, he had them stop the litter that he might see the volley of our battery; how the grand dukes talked to him and made him a present of twenty-five

roubles, and how he told them that he wanted to go back to the bastion, in order to teach the younger men, even though he could not work himself. Saying all this in one breath, the woman looks now at you, and now at the sailor, who turns away his face as though he did not hear her and picks at some lint on the pillow, and her eyes sparkle with unusual enthusiasm.

"This is my wife, sir!" remarks the sailor, with an expression which says: "You must pardon her. Of course, she is a woman, and she is saying foolish things."

You begin to understand the defenders of Sevastopol; for some unknown reason you feel ashamed before this man. You would like to tell him so much, in order to express your sympathy and admiration; but you cannot find words, or are dissatisfied with those that occur to you, — and you bow in silence before this speechless, unconscious grandeur and firmness of spirit, this modesty as regards his own worth.

"Well, God grant that you recover soon!" you say to him, and you stop in front of another patient, who is lying on the floor, and apparently awaiting death in unspeakable agony.

It is a fair-complexioned man, with a swollen, pale face. He is on his back, his left hand thrown under his head, in an attitude expressive of excruciating pain. The dry, open mouth with difficulty emits a stertorous breath; his blue, leaden eyes are turned upwards, and the bandaged stump of his right arm protrudes from underneath the rumpled coverlet. The oppressive odour of dead flesh impresses you still more forcibly, and the consuming, internal fire, which penetrates all the limbs of the sufferer, seems to penetrate you, too.

"Is he unconscious?" you ask the woman who is walking behind you, and who glances kindly at you, as at a relative.

"No, he can hear still, though very faintly," she adds,

in a whisper. "I have offered him some tea to-day, — well, even though he is a stranger to me, I ought to pity him, — but he hardly drank any."

"How do you feel?" you ask him.

The wounded soldier rolls his pupils, in reply to your voice, but he does not see, nor understand you.

"A burning in my heart!"

A little farther on, you see an old soldier changing his linen. His face and body are of an indefinite cinnamon colour, and as lean as a skeleton's. He has no arm at all: it has been cauterized at the armpit. He sits up briskly; but by his dull, dim eyes, by the terrible leanness and the wrinkles of his face, you see that he is a creature that has forfeited the better part of his life in suffering.

On the other side, you notice on a cot the agonized, pale, gentle face of a woman, upon whose cheek plays a feverish glow.

"Our sailor woman was struck by a bomb on the fifth," your guide tells you. "She was bringing her husband his dinner to the bastion."

"Well, did they cut it off?"

"Yes, above the knee."

If your nerves are strong, go now through the door on the left: in that room they are putting on bandages and performing operations. You will there see doctors, with arms blood-stained up to their elbows, and pale, morose countenances, busy at a cot, on which, with open eyes and speaking, as though in delirium, meaningless but sometimes simple and touching words, lies a wounded soldier, under the influence of chloroform. The doctors are occupied with the disgusting but beneficent work of amputation. You will see the sharp, bent knife entering the healthy body; you will see the wounded man suddenly come to his senses, with a terrible, piercing cry, and with curses; you will see the surgeon's assistant throw the

amputated arm into a corner; you will see, on a litter, in the same room, another wounded man, who, watching the operation performed on his companion, writhes and groans, not so much from physical pain, as from the moral anguish of anticipation, — you will see terrible, soul-stirring spectacles; you will see war, not in its regular, beautiful, and brilliant array, with music and drum-taps, with fluttering flags, and generals going through evolutions with their horses, but war in its real aspect, — in blood, in suffering, in death.

Upon issuing from this house of suffering, you will certainly experience a feeling of relief; you will breathe in the fresh air with fuller lungs, will feel pleasure in the consciousness of your health, but, at the same time, in the contemplation of this suffering, you will draw the consciousness of your nothingness, and you will go calmly and without any indecision to the bastions.

"What do the death and suffering of such an insignificant worm as I mean in comparison with so many deaths and so much suffering?" But the sight of the clear sky, the gleaming sun, the beautiful city, the open church, and the military moving in various directions soon brings your mind into the normal condition of light-heartedness, petty cares, and preoccupation with the present alone.

Maybe you will see emerging from the church the funeral of some officer, with a rose-coloured coffin, and music, and unfurled banners; maybe the sounds of firing from the bastions reach your ear, but that will not induce your former thoughts. The funeral will appear to you as a very fine warlike spectacle, the sounds as very fine warlike sounds, but you will not connect with this spectacle, nor with these sounds, the clear idea of suffering and death which you have formed at the point where the wounds are dressed.

After passing the church and the barricade, you will enter into the most animated part of the city, living its

own inner life. On both sides are the signs of shops and inns. Tradespeople, women in bonnets and kerchiefs, foppish officers, — everything tells of the firmness of spirit, the self-confidence, and the security of the inhabitants.

Go into the inn on the right, if you wish to hear the conversations of the sailors and officers: no doubt they are now telling of the past night, of Fénka, of the action of the 24th, of how expensive and bad the cutlets are that they serve, and of how this or that companion was killed.

"The deuce take it, but it's bad with us to-day!" says a fair-browed, beardless naval officer in a green, hand-made scarf.

"Where is that?" asks another.

"In the fourth bastion," answers the youthful officer, and you are sure to look with greater attention, and even with a certain reverence, at the fair-browed officer, as he mentions the fourth bastion. His too great volubility, his waving of hands, his loud laughter and voice, which had struck you as impudent, now will appear to you as that peculiar dare-devil mood which some very young men acquire after peril; still, you imagine that he is going to tell you how bad it is in the fourth bastion from the cannon-balls and bombs: not at all! it is bad because it is dirty there.

"It is impossible to walk over to the battery," he says, pointing at his boots, which are covered with mud above the calf.

"My best gun-captain has been killed to-day, — he was struck in the forehead," says another.

"Who? Mityúkhin? No — Shall I ever get that veal? Rascals!" he adds, turning to the waiter —

"Not Mityúkhin, but Abrámov. He was a brave fellow, — he was in six sorties."

At the other corner of the table two infantry officers

are seated at cutlets and peas, with a bottle of sour Crimean wine, called "Bordeaux:" one of them, with a red collar and two stars on his overcoat, a young man, is telling the other, with a black collar and without stars, about the action at Álma. The first has imbibed a little freely, and from the hesitation in his recital, from the indecision in his glance, expressive of a suspicion that he is doubted, but especially from the fact that he is playing too great a part in all this, and that it is all too terrible, it is evident that he is swerving greatly from stern truth.

But you do not care for these stories, which you will, for a long time to come, hear in all the corners of Russia: you want to go at once to the bastions, especially to the fourth, of which you have been told so many different tales. When somebody tells you that he has been in the fourth bastion, he announces the fact with special delight and pride; when some one says that he is going to the fourth bastion, you will be sure to notice a slight agitation in him, or too great an indifference; if they wish to tease somebody, they tell him, "You ought to be stationed in the fourth bastion;" if you meet a litter, and ask, "Where from?" the answer is generally, "From the fourth bastion." There are, on the whole, two distinct opinions in regard to this terrible bastion: one, the opinion of those who have never been there, and who are convinced that the fourth bastion is a sure grave for any one who does go there; the other, the opinion of those who live in it, like that fair-complexioned midshipman, and who will say of the fourth bastion, that it is dry or dirty there, warm or cold in the earth huts, and so forth.

In the half-hour which you have had in the inn, the weather has changed: the fog that has been hanging over the sea has gathered into gray, dull, damp clouds, and is shrouding the sun; a gloomy, frozen mist is settling

down and wetting the roofs, the sidewalks, and the overcoats of the soldiers.

You pass another barricade, and through a door on the right walk up a broad street. Beyond this barricade the houses on both sides of the street are uninhabited; there are no shop signs, the doors are covered with boards, the windows are broken; here a corner of the house is shattered, there a roof is pierced. The structures look like old veterans who have suffered all kinds of woe and want, and seem to be looking haughtily, and even somewhat contemptuously, at you. On the road you stumble on shells strewn about, and on puddles full of water, dug out by bombs in the stony soil. In the street you meet or catch up with detachments of soldiers, Cossack sharpshooters, and officers; occasionally you see a woman or a child. The woman does not wear a bonnet; she is a sailor's wife, in a fur jacket and soldier boots.

Proceeding along the street and descending a small hill, you observe all about you, not houses, but certain strange ruin-heaps of stones, boards, clay, and beams; in front of you, on a steep hill, you see a black, dirty space, checkered by ditches, — and that is the fourth bastion. Here you find still fewer people; one sees no women at all; the soldiers walk rapidly; along the road you may notice drops of blood, and you are sure to meet four soldiers with a litter, and on the litter a pale, sallow face, and a blood-stained overcoat. If you ask, "Where are you wounded?" the bearers will tell you, angrily, without turning toward you, "In the leg," or "In the arm," if he is slightly wounded; or they will keep sullen silence, if the head does not appear on the litter, or he is dead, or severely wounded.

The whizzing of a cannon-ball or bomb near by, while you are ascending the hill, gives you an unpleasant sensation. You suddenly will understand, quite differently from what you understood before, the meaning of those

discharges which you had heard in the city. Some joyful recollection will suddenly flash through your imagination; your own personality will begin to interest you more than your observations; you will show less attention to your surroundings, and you will suddenly be seized by an unpleasant sensation of indecision. In spite of this mean little voice at the sight of peril, which is speaking within you, you, especially as you glance at the soldier who, waving his arms, and slipping down-hill over the liquid mud, runs toward you, laughing, — you silence that voice, involuntarily straighten out your chest, lift your head higher, and clamber up the slippery hill of clay.

You have barely reached the summit, when on the right and left of you rifle-balls begin to whizz, and you stop to reflect whether you had not better walk in the trench, which runs parallel to the road; but the trench is filled more than knee-deep with such a liquid, yellow, ill-smelling mud, that you will certainly select the road along the brow of the hill, especially since you see everybody else walking in the road. After passing two hundred steps, you come out on a dirty expanse which is all dug up, and which is surrounded on all sides by gabions, earthworks, casemates, platforms, and dug-outs, on which stand large cast-iron guns, and on which cannon-balls lie in regular heaps. Everything seems to be scattered about without any aim, connection, or order. Here, in the battery, sits a group of sailors; there in the middle of the space, half-buried in the mud, lies a broken cannon; there an infantry soldier, shouldering his gun, crosses the battery, and with difficulty pulls his feet out of the sticky mud. But everywhere, on all sides, and in all places, you see splinters, unexploded bombs, cannon-balls, signs of the camp, — and all that is merged in the liquid, viscous mud. Not far from you, as you imagine, you hear a cannon-ball strike; you think you hear on all sides the various sounds of bullets, — buzzing like a bee,

whistling, whizzing, or whining like a string, — you hear the terrible booming of a discharge which shakes you all up, and seems awful and terrible to you.

"So here it is, the fourth bastion! Here is this terrible, truly awful place!" you think, experiencing a slight sensation of pride and a mighty sensation of suppressed terror. But you must be undeceived; this is not yet the fourth bastion. This is the Yazónov redoubt, — a comparatively secure, and not at all terrible place. In order to reach the fourth bastion, turn to the right, along this narrow trench, along which a foot-soldier is moving with bent body. Along this trench you will, perhaps, again meet stretchers, a sailor, soldiers with spades; you will see miners, and dug-outs in the mud, into which two men can creep by bending; and you will see there the sharpshooters of the Black Sea battalions, who change their boots, eat, smoke their pipes, and live in there; and you will see again the same stinking mud all around you, the traces of an encampment, and abandoned cast iron of every possible shape.

By walking another three hundred steps, you again come out to a battery, — to a small square cut up by ditches, and surrounded by gabions filled with dirt, guns on platforms, and earth ramparts. Here you will, probably, see some five sailors, playing cards under the breastwork, and a naval officer, who, noticing that you are a newcomer, and curious, will gladly show you everything under his charge which might interest you. This officer so calmly rolls up a cigarette with yellow paper, while seated on a gun, so calmly passes from one embrasure to another, so calmly speaks with you, without the least affectation, that, in spite of the bullets, which whizz above you oftener than before, you yourself become cool, and attentively question the officer and listen to his story.

This officer will tell you — but only if you question him about it — of the bombardment of the 5th; he

will tell you how only one gun of his battery could be put in action, and how of all the attendants only eight men were left, and how, nevertheless, on the following 6th, he fired off all his guns; he will tell you how on the 5th a cannon-ball entered an earth hut of the sailors, and laid low eleven men; he will show you through the embrasure the batteries and trenches of the enemy, which are here not more than from two hundred to two hundred and fifty feet distant. I am, however, afraid that under the influence of the buzzing bullets, you, leaning out of the embrasure, in order to catch a glimpse of the enemy, will see nothing, or, if you do see, you will be very much surprised to find that this white rocky rampart, which is so near to you, and where now and then burst white cloudlets of smoke, — that this white rampart is the enemy, — he, as the soldiers and sailors say.

It is even quite possible that the naval officer, from vanity, or simply to afford himself an amusement, will want to do a little firing in your presence. "Send the gun-captain and the crew up to the gun!" and about fourteen sailors, putting their pipes into their pockets, or hurriedly munching their hardtack, will briskly and gaily walk up to the gun, clattering with their spiked boots on the platform, and load it. Look closely at the faces, the whole form, and the movements of these men: in every wrinkle of their sunburnt, broad-cheeked faces, in every muscle, in the breadth of their shoulders, in the stoutness of their legs, clad in huge boots, in every motion — calm, firm, deliberate — are seen the chief characteristics of Russian strength, simplicity and tenacity; but here, you imagine that the peril, the wretchedness, and the sufferings of war have imprinted on every face, in addition to these chief traits, the consciousness of their own worth, and of elevated thought and feeling.

Suddenly a frightful roar, which shakes not only your aural organs, but your whole being as well, startles you

so that your whole body quivers. Thereupon you hear the retreating whistle of the projectile, and a dense powder smoke envelops you, the platform, and the black figures of the sailors moving upon it. About this shot of ours you will hear various comments by the sailors, and you will observe their animation, and the manifestation of a feeling which, perhaps, you had not expected to see, — the feeling of malice, of revenging themselves on the enemy, which is concealed in every breast.

"Struck right into the embrasure; I think it has killed two — there they are carrying them," are the joyful exclamations you hear. "Now, he is getting mad; he will let her go in a minute," somebody remarks, and, indeed, soon after you see a flash and smoke in front of you. The sentry on the breastwork cries, "Can-non!" Immediately after a cannon-ball whines past you, splashes against the ground, and scatters a funnel-shaped mass of débris and stones about you. The commander of the battery is angry at this ball, and orders them to load a second and third gun; the enemy keeps returning the fire, and you experience interesting sensations, and hear and see interesting things.

The sentry again shouts "Cannon!" and you hear the same sound and thud, and see the same débris; or he calls out "Mortar!" and you hear the even, fairly agreeable whistling of a bomb, with which you find it hard to connect the idea of something terrible; you hear this whistling coming nearer and growing faster; then you see a black ball, feel a palpable blow against the ground, and hear the ringing explosion of the bomb. Then the splinters fly through the air whistling and whining; stones rustle in the air, and you are bespattered with mud. At these sounds you experience a strange sensation of pleasure, and at the same time of fear. During the moment when you are conscious of the projectile's flight above your head, you cannot help thinking that it

will kill you; but a feeling of vanity sustains you, and nobody notices the knife that is cutting your heart. But when the projectile has passed by you, without doing you any harm, you revive, and you are seized, though only for an instant, by a blissful, inexpressibly pleasant sensation, so that you find a special charm in danger, in this game of life and death; you want the balls or bombs to fall closer and closer to you.

But the sentry shouts again, in his loud, thick voice, "Mortar!" and again there is a whistle, a blow, and an explosion of a bomb; but at the very moment of this sound you are startled by the groan of a man. You reach the wounded man, who, blood-stained and bespattered with mud, has a strange inhuman aspect, at the same time as the stretcher. A part of the sailor's chest has been torn out. In the first few minutes you see on his mud-covered face nothing but terror and a feigned, premature expression of suffering, peculiar to a man in this condition; but when the stretcher is brought and the wounded man is placed there on his sound side, you observe that this expression is exchanged for one of ecstasy and of an exalted, unexpressed thought; his eyes burn more brightly, his teeth are set, his head raises itself with difficulty, and, while he is being lifted up, he halts the stretcher, and with effort, and in a trembling voice, says to his companions, "Forgive me, brothers!" He wants to say something else, and it is evident that he wants to say something touching, but he only repeats "Forgive me, brothers!" Just then a fellow sailor walks over to him, puts his cap on his head, which the wounded man holds up for the purpose, and calmly, with equanimity, waving his arms, returns to his gun.

"Seven or eight men a day are taken off that way," the naval officer informs you, in response to the expression of terror on your face, yawning and rolling his cigarette of yellow paper.

And so you have seen the defenders of Sevastopol in the very place of the defence, and you walk back, for some reason paying no attention to the balls and bullets which continue to whistle until you reach the ruins of the theatre, — you walk in a quiet, exalted mood. The main and consoling conviction which you have carried away is that it is impossible to break the strength of the Russian people, — and this impossibility you have seen, not in the mass of traverses, breastworks, cunningly intertwined trenches, mines, and ordnance piled upon each other, of which you did not understand a thing, but in the eyes, speeches, and manner, in what is called the spirit, of the defenders of Sevastopol. What they are doing, they do so simply, with so little effort, and with such intensity, that you are persuaded that they are able to do a hundred things more — they can do anything.

You comprehend that the feeling which makes them work is not that feeling of paltriness, vanity, obliviousness, such as you have experienced yourself, but another, more powerful sentiment which has made of them men who live calmly under cannon-balls, surrounded by hundreds of accidents of death, instead of the one death to which all men are subject, and who live under these conditions amidst uninterrupted labour, vigilance, and mud. People cannot assume these terrible conditions for the sake of a cross, a name, or a threat; there must be another, higher impelling cause. This cause is a feeling which rarely comes to the surface and is kept in bashful abeyance in a Russian, but which is in the depth of every soul, — the love of his country. Only now the stories about the first siege of Sevastopol, when there were no fortifications in it, no armies, no physical possibility of retaining it, and yet when there was not the slightest doubt that it would not surrender to the enemy, — about the times when that hero, worthy of ancient Greece, Kornilóv, driving through the army, said, " We will die, boys,

but will not surrender Sevastopol," and our Russians, incapable of expressing themselves glibly, answered, "We will die, hurrah!" — only now the stories about these times have ceased for you to be a beautiful historical tradition, but have become a certainty, a fact. You can easily comprehend and imagine to yourselves the people whom you have just seen as those heroes, who in those troublous times did not fall, but rise in spirit, and with delight prepared themselves to die, not for the city, but for their country. This epic of Sevastopol, of which the Russian nation was the hero, will long leave grand traces in Russia.

It is growing toward evening. The sun, before setting, has emerged from the gray clouds which veil the sky, and suddenly has illuminated with its crimson light the violet clouds, the greenish sea that is covered with ships and boats and that is agitated in an even, broad swell, and the white structures of the city, and the people moving about in its streets. Over the water are borne the sounds of some antiquated waltz, which the regimental band is playing in the boulevard, and the sounds of volleys from the bastions, which strangely echo them.

Sevastopol, April 25, 1855.

IN MAY, 1855

I.

Six months have passed since the time when the first cannon-ball whistled from the bastions of Sevastopol and tore up the earth in the works of the enemy, and since then thousands of bombs, balls, and bullets have been flying incessantly from the bastions into the trenches, and from the trenches into the bastions, and the angel of death has not ceased hovering over them.

Thousands of human ambitions have been slighted, thousands have been satisfied, or puffed up, and thousands have been put to rest in the embraces of death. What a mass of rose-coloured coffins and linen shrouds! But still the same sounds are heard from the bastions; with the same involuntary trepidation and terror the French are looking on a clear day from their encampment on the yellowish, furrowed earth of the bastions of Sevastopol, on the black figures of our sailors moving on them, and counting the embrasures from which threateningly protrude our iron guns. Just so the master's mate in the telegraph tower surveys through the glasses the motley forms of the French, their batteries, tents, columns, moving about on the green hill, and the puffs of smoke that flash in the trenches; and with the same eagerness heterogeneous masses of men from all the corners of the world, with still more heterogeneous desires, are streaming into this fateful spot. And the question, still undecided by diplomacy, has not yet been solved by powder and blood.

II.

In the besieged city of Sevastopol, the regimental band was playing in the boulevard, near the pavilion, and throngs of the military and of women were strolling leisurely through its avenues. The bright vernal sun had risen in the morning above the works of the English, had passed over to the bastions, thence to the city, to the Nicholas barracks, and, shining with equal cheer upon all, was now sinking toward the blue, distant sea, which swayed in even motion and was resplendent with a silvery sheen.

A tall infantry officer, with rather stooping shoulders, who was drawing on his hand a clean, though not very white, glove, came out of the gate in front of a small sailor cottage, built on the left side of Ocean Street, and, looking pensively at his feet, ascended the street toward the boulevard.

The expression of this officer's homely countenance did not betray any great mental powers, but simple-mindedness, thoughtfulness, honesty, and a tendency to sobriety. He was badly built, not very agile, and apparently timid in his movements. He was dressed in a little worn cap, a light overcoat of a rather peculiar lilac shade, behind the edge of which could be seen a gold watch-chain, pantaloons with foot-straps, and clean, well-polished calfskin boots. He might have been a German, if the features of his face had not indicated his pure Russian origin, or an adjutant, or a regimental quartermaster (but then he would have had spurs), or an officer who for the period of the cam-

paign had left the cavalry or, perhaps, the Guards. He was, in reality, a former cavalry officer, and at the present moment, as he was walking up toward the boulevard, he was thinking of a letter which he had received from his former comrade, now out of service and a landed proprietor in the Government of T——, and from his wife, pale, blue-eyed Natásha, his great friend. He recalled one passage in that letter, in which his comrade said:

"When the *Invalid* is brought to us, *Púpka* (thus the ex-uhlan called his wife) rushes headlong into the ante-chamber, seizes the gazette, runs with it to the bay window in the *arbour*, or into the *drawing-room* (in which, as you will remember, we have passed such delightful winter evenings, when the regiment was stationed in our city), and reads the heroic deeds of you soldiers with such zeal as you can hardly imagine. She frequently says of you: 'Now, Mikháylov,' says she, 'is a *dear*. I am ready to kiss him when I see him. He *is fighting in the bastions*, and will certainly get the Cross of St. George, and they will write about him in the papers —' and so forth, so that I am beginning in all earnestness to be jealous of you."

In another passage he said:

"The gazettes reach us dreadfully late, and though there is a lot of oral news, you can't believe it all. For example, the young *ladies with music*, whom you know, were saying yesterday that Napoleon had been captured by our Cossacks, and sent to St. Petersburg; but you can imagine how little I believe this. We were told by a gentleman who has arrived from St. Petersburg (he has a place on special affairs at a minister's, a charming fellow, and now that there is no one in town, he is the greatest imaginable *resource* to us) so he assures us that our men have occupied Eupatória, so that *the French have no longer any communication with Balakláva*, and that we had two hundred soldiers killed in this action,

while the French lost fifteen thousand. My wife was so elated at this, that she *caroused* all night, and she says that her heart tells her that you have certainly taken part in this action, and have distinguished yourself."

In spite of the words and expressions which I have purposely given in italics, and of the whole tone of the letter, Staff-Captain Mikháylov recalled, with inexpressibly melancholy pleasure, his pale friend in the province, and how he used to sit with her in the arbour in the evenings, and talk about sentiments; he recalled his good comrade, the uhlan, and how he would get angry and lose, when they played in the study at kopek-stakes, and how his wife would laugh at him; he thought of the friendship of these people for himself (maybe, he thought, there was something more than friendship on the side of his pale friend): these people with their surroundings flashed through his imagination in a remarkably soothing, blissfully rose-coloured light, and, smiling at his reminiscences, he placed his hand on the pocket where lay the letter which was so *dear* to him.

From the reminiscences Staff-Captain Mikháylov involuntarily passed to dreams and hopes. "What will be Natásha's surprise and joy," he thought, striding through a narrow side street, "when she suddenly reads in the *Invalid* how I was the first to climb on a cannon, and received the Cross of St. George! The captaincy I am to receive anyway, having been recommended for it long ago. Then I may easily get the grade of major by seniority this very year, because many of my fellow officers have been killed in this campaign, and many more, no doubt, will be. And then there will be another engagement, and I, as a well-known man, will be entrusted with a regiment — lieutenant-colonel — the Anna decoration on my neck — colonel — " and he was already a general, honouring with his visit Natásha, the widow of his comrade, who, according to his dreams, would be dead

by that time, — when the sounds of the boulevard music reached his ears more distinctly, the throngs of people burst upon his vision, and he found himself in the boulevard, a staff-captain as before.

III.

He went, at first, to the pavilion, near which stood the musicians, for whom other soldiers of the regiment acted as stands and held the open music, and near whom scribes, yunkers, and nurses with their children formed a circle, rather looking on than listening. About the pavilion stood, sat, and walked chiefly sailors, adjutants, and officers in white gloves. On the broad avenue of the boulevard walked all sorts of officers and all sorts of women, now and then in bonnets, but more often in kerchiefs (there were also some without kerchiefs or bonnets); there was not an old woman among them, but, on the contrary, all were young. Farther below, in the fragrant, shady avenues of white acacias, walked or sat separate groups.

No one on the boulevard was especially delighted to meet Captain Mikháylov, except, perhaps, Captain Obzhógov and Captain Súslikov of his own regiment, who fervently pressed his hand; but the former wore camel's-hair trousers, no gloves, a threadbare overcoat, and had a sweaty face, and the latter shouted so loudly and carelessly, that it was annoying to walk with them, especially in the presence of the officers with the white gloves (to one of whom, an adjutant, Staff-Captain Mikháylov bowed, and to another, an officer of the staff, he could have bowed, because he had met him twice in the house of a common acquaintance). Besides, what pleasure was it to him to walk with Messrs. Obzhógov and Súslikov, since he met them without this about six times

a day, and each time pressed their hands? It was not for this that he had come to the *music.*

It would give him pleasure to walk up to the adjutant, with whom he exchanged greetings, and to talk with him and his company, not that Captains Obzhógov and Súslikov and Lieutenant Pashtétski might see that he was speaking with them, but simply because they were pleasant people, and besides knew all the news, and would tell it to him.

But why was Staff-Captain Mikháylov afraid to walk over to them? "What if they suddenly should not bow to me," he thought, "or if they should bow and continue speaking among themselves, as if I were not present, or should walk entirely away from me, and I should remain all alone among the *aristocrats?*" The word *aristocrats* (in the sense of a higher, select circle, in whatsoever condition in life) has of late acquired with us, in Russia, where, it seems, it ought never to exist, great popularity, and has penetrated into every part of the country and into every stratum of society whither vanity has penetrated (and into what conditions of time and circumstance does this wretched inclination not penetrate?): among merchants, among officials, scribes, and officers, into Sarátov, into Mamadýshi, into Vínnitsy, everywhere where people live. And since there were many people in Sevastopol, consequently there was also much vanity, that is, there were many *aristocrats,* in spite of the fact that at any moment death was hanging over the head of every *aristocrat* and of every *plebeian.*

To Captain Obzhógov, Staff-Captain Mikháylov was an *aristocrat;* to Staff-Captain Mikháylov, Adjutant Kalúgin was an *aristocrat,* because he was an adjutant and on "thou" terms with another adjutant. To Adjutant Kalúgin, Count Nórdov was an *aristocrat,* because he was an aid-de-camp.

Vanity, vanity, and vanity everywhere, even on the

brink of the grave, and among people ready to die from deep conviction. Vanity! It must be a characteristic trait and peculiar disease of our century. Why was nothing heard of this passion among men of former days, as one hears of the smallpox and of the cholera? Why are there only three kinds of people in our age: those who accept the principle of vanity as a necessary, consequently as a just, fact, and who freely submit to it; those who accept it as an unfortunate, but insurmountable, condition; and those, again, who act unconsciously and servilely under its influence? Why did Homer and Shakespeare speak of love, of glory, of suffering, while the literature of our age is only an endless story of snobs and vanity?

The staff-captain walked twice in indecision past the circle of his *aristocrats;* the third time he made an effort over himself, and went up to them. This circle was composed of four officers: of Adjutant Kalúgin, Mikháylov's acquaintance, of Adjutant Prince Gáltsin, who really was something of an aristocrat as compared with Kalúgin, of Colonel Neférdov, one of the so-called 122 society men (who had entered the service for this campaign from the retired list), and of Captain of Horse Praskúkhin, also one of those 122. Fortunately for Mikháylov, Kalúgin was in an excellent frame of mind (the general had just had a very confidential talk with him, and Prince Gáltsin, who had arrived from St. Petersburg, was stopping with him); he did not regard it as beneath his dignity to extend his hand to Staff-Captain Mikháylov, a thing which, however, Praskúkhin could not make up his mind to do, although he had frequently met Mikháylov in the bastion, had again and again drunk his wine and brandy, and even owed him twelve roubles and a half at cards. As he did not yet know Prince Gáltsin very intimately, he did not wish to betray to him his acquaintance with a simple staff-captain of the infantry. He bowed slightly to him.

"Well, captain," said Kalúgin, "when shall we go again to the little bastion? Do you remember how we met on the Schwartz redoubt? It was hot there, wasn't it?"

"Yes, it was," said Mikháylov, recalling how on that night, as he was making his way along the trench up to the bastion, he had met Kalúgin, who was walking along in a dashing manner, briskly clanking his sabre.

"By rights, I ought to go there to-morrow; but we have a sick man," continued Mikháylov, "an officer, and so — "

He was on the point of telling that it was not his turn, but that the commander of the eighth company was ill, and that, as there was but the ensign left in the company, he had considered it his duty to propose himself in place of Lieutenant Nepshisétski, and that therefore he was going to the bastion to-day. Kalúgin was not listening to him.

"I feel that something will happen soon," said he to Prince Gáltsin.

"And won't anything happen to-day?" timidly asked Mikháylov, glancing now at Kalúgin, and now at Gáltsin.

Nobody replied. Prince Gáltsin only frowned, stared past his cap, and, after a moment's silence, asked:

"She is a fine girl, the one in the red kerchief. Do you not know her, captain?"

"She lives near my quarters, and is a sailor's daughter," replied the staff-captain.

"Come, let us get a good look at her!"

Prince Gáltsin took, on one side, Kalúgin's arm, and on the other, the staff-captain's, being convinced in advance that this must necessarily afford great pleasure to the latter, which, indeed, was true enough.

The staff-captain was superstitious, and regarded it as a great sin to busy himself with women before an action; but on this occasion he feigned to be a libertine, which

Prince Gáltsin and Kalúgin obviously did not believe, and which extremely surprised the maiden in the red kerchief, who had noticed more than once that the captain blushed whenever he passed by her window. Praskúkhin followed them from behind and kept nudging the arm of Prince Gáltsin, making all kinds of remarks in French. As it was not possible for four persons to walk abreast on the narrow path, he was compelled to walk by himself; only, when making the second circuit, he linked his arm with a well-known, brave naval officer, Servyágin, who had come up to speak with him, and who was also anxious to join the circle of the *aristocrats*. The famous hero was delighted to put his muscular, honest hand through the arm of Praskúkhin, who was known to everybody, and to Servyágin himself, as a not very decent kind of man. When Praskúkhin, explaining to Prince Gáltsin his acquaintance with *that* sailor, whispered to him that he was a famous hero, Prince Gáltsin, who had been in the fourth bastion the day before and had seen a bomb explode within twenty paces of him, did not pay the least attention to Servyágin, on the ground that he himself was a not less brave fellow than that gentleman, and because he surmised that very many reputations were not merited.

It gave Staff-Captain Mikháylov such pleasure to promenade in this company, that he forgot his *dear* letter from T——, and the gloomy thoughts that had assailed him before his departure to the bastion. He stayed with them until they began to converse exclusively among themselves, and evade his glances, by which they meant to let him know that he could leave; finally they walked altogether away from him. But the staff-captain was, nevertheless, contented, and, when he passed by Yunker Baron Pest, who had been uncommonly proud and self-confident ever since the previous night, when he had for the first time passed a night in the blindage of the fifth bastion, and

who, in consequence of this, regarded himself as a hero, he was not in the least mortified by the suspiciously supercilious expression with which the yunker straightened himself out and took off his cap to him.

IV.

No sooner had the staff-captain crossed the threshold of his lodgings, than entirely different thoughts entered his mind. He saw his small room, with its uneven earth floor and crooked windows pasted over with paper, his old bed, with a rug nailed to the wall above it, on which an amazon was represented, and where two Túla pistols were hanging, and the dirty bed, with the chintz coverlet, of the yunker who was living with him; he saw his Nikíta, with dishevelled, greasy hair, who, scratching himself, rose from the floor; he saw his old overcoat, his boots, and a bundle, from which protruded the point of a cheese and the neck of a wine bottle filled with brandy, gotten ready for him for the bastion, — and he suddenly recalled that he was to pass the whole night with his company in the lodgments.

"I shall certainly be killed to-night," thought the staff-captain, "I feel it. The main thing is that it was not my turn to go, and I offered myself. It is always the man who obtrudes who is killed. And what is it that ails that accursed Nepshisétski? It is very likely he is not ill at all, and here another man will be killed in his place, he certainly will be. However, if I am not killed, I shall by all means be recommended for promotion. I noticed how the commander of the regiment was pleased when he heard me say: 'Permit me to go, if Lieutenant Nepshisétski is ill.' If it does not bring me a majorship, I cannot fail getting a Cross of St. Vladímir.

"This is the thirteenth time I have gone to the bastion. Oh, thirteen is a bad number. I am sure I shall be

killed, I feel I shall be! but somebody had to go, and the company could not be sent out with the ensign. If something happened, the honour of the regiment, the honour of the army, would be involved. It was my duty to go — yes, my sacred duty. Still, I have a presentiment."

The staff-captain forgot that a similar presentiment, in a greater or lesser degree, had assailed him before when he had to go to the bastion, and he did not know that the same more or less strong presentiment was experienced by everybody who went into action. After having calmed himself with the conception of duty, which was especially developed and strong in the staff-captain, he sat down at the table, and began to write his farewell letter to his father. Ten minutes later, after he had written the letter, he rose from the table, with eyes wet with tears, and, saying mentally all the prayers which he knew, he began to dress himself. His tipsy, coarse servant lazily handed him his new coat (the old one, which the staff-captain put on whenever he went to the bastion, was not mended).

"Why is not the coat mended? All you care for is sleeping, lazybones!" angrily said Mikháylov.

"Sleeping?" growled Nikíta. "I am doing nothing but running around the whole day like a dog; I am all worn out, and then I may not even sleep?"

"You are drunk again, I see!"

"I did not get drunk on your money, so why do you reproach me?"

"Shut up, blockhead!" cried the staff-captain, ready to strike him; if he was out of humour before, he now completely lost his patience and felt mortified by the coarseness of Nikíta, whom he liked and even pampered, and with whom he had been living for twelve years.

"Blockhead? Blockhead?" repeated the servant. "Why do you call me such a name, sir? Think what is before you! It is not right to curse!"

Mikháylov recalled whither he was to go soon, and he felt ashamed of himself.

"Whom would you not make lose his patience, Nikíta?" he said, in a meek voice. "Leave this letter to father on the table, — don't touch it!" he added, blushing.

"As you command, sir," said Nikíta, becoming sentimental under the influence of the wine which he had drunk, as he said, on his own money, and winking his eyes, in an obvious desire to burst out into tears.

When the staff-captain said on the steps, "Good-bye, Nikíta!" the latter suddenly exploded in forced sobs, and darted forward to kiss the hands of his master. "Good-bye, master!" he said, blubbering. An old sailor woman, who was standing on the porch, being a woman, could not keep from joining this sentimental scene, began to wipe her eyes with her dirty sleeve and to say something about gentlemen even having to suffer all kinds of torments, and that she, poor creature, was left a widow, and began for the hundredth time to tell drunken Nikíta her woe: how her husband was killed in the first bombardment, how her cottage was laid in ruins (the one she was now living in did not belong to her), and so forth. After his master's departure, Nikíta lighted a pipe, asked the landlady's daughter to go for some brandy, and at once stopped weeping; on the contrary, he exchanged some angry words with the old woman for a little pail which, so he claimed, she had smashed.

"And, maybe, I shall only be wounded," the staff-captain reflected, as he was approaching the bastion with his company, in the twilight. "Where will it be? How? Here or here?" he said to himself mentally, pointing to his abdomen and to his chest. "If it should be here," he thought of the upper part of his leg, "it might go all round. But if here, and with a splinter at that, — that will be the end!"

The staff-captain walked along the trenches and reached

the lodgments in safety; in conjunction with an officer of sappers he set the men to work, though the darkness was complete, and sat down in a small pit beneath the breastwork. There was little firing. Occasionally there was a flash of fire, now on our side, now on *his*, and the burning fuse of a bomb described a fiery arc on the dark, starry heaven. But all the bombs lodged far behind and to the right of the entrenchment, in the pit of which the staff-captain was sitting. He took a drink of brandy, ate a piece of cheese, lighted his cigarette, and, having said his prayers, wanted to take a nap.

V.

Prince Gáltsin, Lieutenant-Colonel Neférdov, and Praskúkhin, whom no one had invited, with whom no one spoke, but who did not leave them, went from the boulevard to Kalúgin's to drink tea.

"Well, you did not finish the story about Váska Méndel," said Kalúgin, who, having taken off his overcoat, sat down near the window in a soft easy chair, and unbuttoned the collar of his clean, starched linen shirt. "How did he get married?"

"It is killing, friend! *Je vous dis, il y avait un temps on ne parlait que de ça à Pétersbourg,*" said Prince Gáltsin, smiling; he leaped up from his seat near the piano, and seated himself on the window near Kalúgin. "It is simply killing. I know all the details —"

And he began gaily, cleverly, and briskly to tell a love-story, which we will leave untold, because it does not interest us. It is, however, a remarkable fact that not only Prince Gáltsin, but all the gentlemen, of whom one took up his position on the window, another stretched his legs, and a third sat down at the piano, seemed to be different men from what they had been in the boulevard: there was nothing of that ridiculous conceit and haughtiness which they displayed before the officers of infantry; here among their own, they were, especially Kalúgin and Prince Gáltsin, quite natural, and agreeable, merry, and good fellows. The conversation turned on their St. Petersburg fellow officers and acquaintances.

"What of Maslóvski?"

"Which? The uhlan of the body-guard, or of the horse-guard?"

"I know both of them. The one of the horse-guard was a boy in my days, just out of school. What is the elder one now? A captain of cavalry?"

"Yes, long ago."

"And is he still keeping his gipsy maid?"

"No, he has given her up —" and so forth, in the same strain.

Then Prince Gáltsin sat down at the piano, and sang a gipsy song superbly. Praskúkhin, without being asked by any one to do so, began to accompany him, and he did it so well that he was asked to continue singing second, which gave him much pleasure.

A servant came in with tea, cream, and cracknels on a silver tray.

"Serve the prince!" said Kalúgin.

"Really, it is strange, when you come to think of it," said Gáltsin, taking a glass, and walking to the window. "Here we are in a besieged city: piano, tea with cream, and such quarters as, truly, I should like to have in St. Petersburg."

"If it were not for this," said the old lieutenant-colonel, who was dissatisfied with everything, "this eternal expectation of something would be insufferable — to see men killed day after day — and no end to it — and to live in mud and have no comforts."

"And how is it with our infantry officers," said Kalúgin, "who are living with their soldiers in the bastions and in the blindage, and who eat the soldiers' beet soup — how is it with them?"

"How is it with them? Though they do not change their linen for ten days at a time, they are heroes, and wonderful men."

Just then an infantry officer entered the room.

"I — I was ordered — may I report to Gen— to his

Excellency from General N——?" he asked, with a timid bow.

Kalúgin rose, but, without returning the officer's salute, with offensive politeness and a strained, official smile, asked the officer whether it would not please them to wait and, without asking him to be seated, and paying no further attention to him, turned to Gáltsin and began to speak to him in French, so that the poor officer, who was standing in the middle of the room, was absolutely at a loss what to do with himself.

"A very pressing affair," said the officer, after a moment's silence.

"Ah! then please come!" said Kalúgin, putting on his overcoat, and taking the officer to the door.

"*Eh bien, messieurs, je crois, que cela chauffera cette nuit*," said Kalúgin, coming back from the general's.

"What? What is it? À sortie?" they all began to ask.

"I do not know. You will find out yourselves," said Kalúgin, with a mysterious smile.

"My commander is in the bastion, consequently I ought to go there myself," said Praskúkhin, buckling on his sabre.

But nobody replied to him; he ought to have known himself whether he was to go there, or not.

Praskúkhin and Neférdov went out, in order to betake themselves to their places. "Good-bye, gentlemen!" "*Au revoir*, gentlemen! We shall see each other to-night!" cried Kalúgin through the window, as Praskúkhin and Neférdov, leaning on the bows of their Cossack saddles, galloped down the street.

"*Non, dites moi, est-ce qu'il y aura veritablement quelque chose cette nuit*?" said Gáltsin, lying with Kalúgin on the window, and looking at the bombs which were rising above the bastions.

"I may tell you, you see — you have been in the bas-

tions, have you not?" (Gáltsin made a sign of affirmation though he had been but once in the fourth bastion.) "Opposite our lunette was a trench," and Kalúgin, not being a specialist, but still regarding his military reflections as quite correct, began, somewhat confusedly, and distorting the fortification terminology, to tell about the position of our works and about that of the enemy's and about the plan of the impending engagement.

"I declare, they are beginning to crack a little near the lodgments. Oh! is this ours or his? There it bursts," they said, lying in the window, looking at the fiery paths of the bombs crossing each other in the air, at the flashes of the volleys, which for a moment illuminated the dark blue sky, and at the white powder smoke, and listening to the ever increasing sounds of the reports.

"*Quel charmant coup d'œil!* eh?" said Kalúgin, directing his guest's attention to this really beautiful spectacle. "Do you know, at times it is not possible to distinguish a bomb from a star."

"Yes, I just now thought it was a star; but it began to settle, — there it has burst. And that big star over there, what do you call it? It is just like a bomb."

"Do you know, I am so accustomed to these bombs that I am quite sure that in Russia all these will seem to me, in a starry night, to be bombs. One gets so used to things."

"I wonder whether I had not better go to this sortie," said Prince Gáltsin, after a moment of silence.

"Don't say that, friend! Don't even think of it! I won't let you go anyway," answered Kalúgin. "You have time yet, friend!"

"Seriously? So you think that I ought not to go? Eh?"

At this time, a terrible cracking of muskets was heard immediately after the artillery roar, in the direction where these gentlemen were looking, and thousands

of small lights uninterruptedly flashed and gleamed all along the line.

"That's it, the real thing!" said Kalúgin. "I cannot hear with equanimity this musketry-fire; you know, it just gripes my soul. There is a hurrah!" he added, listening attentively to the distant drawling roar of hundreds of voices, "ah-ah-ah," which was borne to him from the bastion.

"Whose hurrah is this, theirs or ours?"

"I do not know; it has now come to a hand-to-hand fight, for the firing has stopped."

At that moment, an officer with a Cossack rode up to the porch beneath the window, and leaped from his horse.

"From where?"

"From the bastion. I must see the general."

"Come on. Well, what is it?"

"They attacked the lodgments — took them — The French brought up immense reserves — attacked ours — there were only two battalions," said, out of breath, the very officer who had come in the evening, with difficulty drawing his breath, but walking toward the door with perfect ease.

"Well, did they retreat?" asked Gáltsin.

"No!" angrily replied the officer. "The battalion came up in time, they were repulsed; but the commander of the regiment was killed, and many officers, and I am ordered to ask for reinforcements."

With these words he went with Kalúgin to the general's, whither we shall not follow him.

Five minutes later, Kalúgin was seated on a Cossack horse (again in that peculiar quasi-Cossack pose, which, so I have observed, all the adjutants, for some reason or other, find especially agreeable), galloped away to the bastion, in order to transmit there certain orders, and to wait for some news of the result of the engagement. Prince Gáltsin, under the influence of that strong agita-

tion which the signs of an impending engagement produce on a spectator who does not take part in it, went out into the street, and began aimlessly to pace up and down.

VI.

Soldiers were carrying the wounded on stretchers and leading them by their arms. The street was completely dark; only here and there lights glimmered in the windows of the hospital or of the quarters of officers sitting up late. From the bastions was borne the same roar of ordnance and of musketry cross-fires, and the same lights flashed against the black heaven. Occasionally could be heard the tramp of the horse of an orderly galloping past, the groan of a wounded soldier, the steps and conversation of the bearers, or a feminine voice of some frightened inhabitant who had gone out on the porch to take a look at the cannonade.

Among the latter was also our acquaintance Nikíta, the old sailor woman, with whom he had in the meantime made peace, and her ten-year-old daughter.

"O Lord, and most holy Virgin!" the old woman said to herself, with a sigh, looking at the bombs which incessantly flew from one side to the other, like balls of fire. "Awful, just awful! Oho! There was nothing like this in the first *bardment.* You see where the accursed one has burst? Right over our house in the village."

"No, that is farther away. They all fall into Aunt Arinka's garden," said the girl.

"And where, oh, where is now my master?" said Nikíta, in a chanting voice, and still a little drunk. "How I do love this master of mine! I love him so that if — God forfend it! — he should be killed in the accursed action, I do not know what I should do with myself,

truly, aunty, upon my word! Just let me tell you there is no master like him! He is not to be mistaken for one of those that play cards here! What are they? Pshaw! In short —" concluded Nikíta, pointing to the lighted window of his master's room, where Yunker Zhvadchéski had invited, in the absence of the staff-captain, some guests for a carousal, in celebration of the cross which he had received; these were Sub-Lieutenant Ugróvich and Sub-Lieutenant Nepshisétski, who was suffering from catarrh.

"The little stars, the little stars keep a-rolling!" the girl, gazing at the sky, broke the silence which followed after Nikíta's words. "There, there another has come down. What is that for, mamma?"

"They will entirely demolish our cottage," said the old woman, sighing, without replying to her daughter's question.

"When we went there to-day with uncle, mamma," continued the girl, in a singsong, "such an awful cannon-ball was lying in the very room near the safe; it must have gone through the vestibule, and have flown into the room — such an awfully big one that you could not lift it."

"Whoever had a husband and money, has left," said the old woman, "but there, they have ruined the last little cottage I had. You see, you see how he is firing, that rascal! Lord, Lord!"

"And as we were coming out, one bomb came a-flying and it burst, and it scattered the dirt, and it almost struck uncle and me with a splinter."

VII.

Prince Gáltsin kept coming across more and more wounded soldiers on stretchers and afoot, supporting each other, and speaking loudly among themselves.

"How they did jump, my friends!" said, in a bass, a tall soldier, carrying two guns on his back. "How they jumped and cried '*Allah! Allah!*'[1] and began to crawl over each other. You kill some, and others come in their place, — there is nothing to be done. An endless — "

But at this point Gáltsin stopped him.

"Are you from the bastion?"

"Yes, your Honour!"

"Well, what has happened there? Tell me!"

"What has happened? A might of them made the advance, your Honour, and they climbed the rampart, and that's all. We have succumbed entirely, your Honour!"

"How succumbed? Did you not repel them?"

"How could we repel them, when his whole might came up against us? They have disabled us all, and we are getting no reinforcements."

The soldier was mistaken, because the trenches were in our possession; but this is a peculiarity commonly observed: a soldier who is wounded in an action always considers it lost and dreadfully sanguinary.

"How is it, I was told they were beaten off?" Gáltsin

[1] Having fought with the Turks, our soldiers had become so accustomed to this cry of the enemy, that they ascribed it also to the French. — *Author's note.*

said, with mortification. "Maybe they were beaten off after you left? How long ago did you leave?"

"Just lately, your Honour!" answered the soldier. "I doubt it. The trenches must all be on his side — we have completely succumbed."

"Well, how is it you are not ashamed? To give up the trenches! This is terrible!" said Gáltsin, saddened by this indifference.

"What was to be done? There was such a might!" grumbled the soldier.

"Oh, your Honour!" suddenly said a soldier on a stretcher which came alongside them. "How could we help giving them up, when nearly all of us have been disabled? If we had had the proper forces, we would not have given them up in a lifetime. But what was to be done? I stabbed one, and then it struck me here — Oh, easier, friends, steadily, friends, walk more steadily! Oh, oh, oh!" groaned the wounded man.

"Indeed, there seems to be too large a crowd coming back," said Gáltsin, again stopping the tall soldier with the two guns. "What are you going for? Oh, there, stop!"

The soldier stopped, and with his left hand raised his cap.

"Whither are you going, and for what?" he cried, sternly, to him. "Good-for —"

But, walking up close to the soldier, he noticed that his right arm was bare above the elbow, and blood-stained.

"Wounded, your Honour!"

"How wounded?"

"Here, I suppose, by a bullet," said the soldier, pointing to the arm. "I can't tell what it was that knocked me in the head," and, bending down, he showed his blood-stained and matted hair on the back of his head.

"Whose is the second gun?"

"A French carbine, your Honour! I took it away. Indeed, I should not have come away, if I did not have to accompany this soldier; he might fall by himself," he added, pointing to a soldier who was walking a little ahead of them, leaning on his gun, and with difficulty dragging along and moving his left leg.

Prince Gáltsin suddenly felt dreadfully ashamed for his unjust suspicions. He was conscious of blushing; he turned his face away, and, without asking anything else of the wounded, or observing them, he walked to the ambulance hall.

Having with difficulty made his way on the porch, between wounded soldiers on foot and the bearers of stretchers, who went in with the wounded and came out with the dead, Gáltsin went into the first room, cast a glance about him, and at once involuntarily turned around, and ran out into the street. It was too terrible!

VIII.

THE large, high, dark hall, illuminated only by four or five candles, with which the surgeons went up to examine the wounded, was literally full. The bearers continually brought in wounded soldiers, placed them close to each other on the floor, which was already so crowded that the unfortunates were pressed together and soaked in the blood of each other, and went out for other men. The puddles of blood, which could be seen in unoccupied spots, the feverish breaths of several hundred men, and the exhalations of the men busy about the stretchers produced a peculiar, oppressive, dense, noisome stench, in which the candles in the different corners of the room flickered gloomily. The sounds of various groans, sighs, and snoring, interrupted now and then by a penetrating cry, hovered in the air. The Sisters of Mercy, with calm faces and with an expression not only of mere feminine, sickly, lachrymose compassion, but of active, practical sympathy, stepping here and there over the wounded, with medicaments, with water, bandages, and lint, flitted between the blood-stained overcoats and shirts. The surgeons, with rolled-up sleeves, kneeling before the wounded, near whom the assistants held the candles, examined, felt, and probed the wounds, in spite of the terrible groans and entreaties of the sufferers. One doctor was seated at a table near the door, and just as Gáltsin entered the hall, he marked down No. 532.

"Iván Bogáev, private of the third company of the S. regiment, *Fractura femuris complicata!*" cried another,

from the end of the hall, feeling the shattered leg. "Turn him around!"

"Oh, oh, fathers, my fathers!" cried the soldier, entreating them not to touch him.

"*Perforatio capitis.*"

"Semén Nefrédov, lieutenant-colonel of the N—— regiment of infantry. You must be patient a little, colonel, or else I can't do anything. I will give you up," said a third, rummaging with a hook in the brain of the unfortunate lieutenant-colonel.

"Oh, it is not necessary! Oh, for the Lord's sake, hurry up, hurry up, for the — ah-ah-ah!"

"*Perforatio pectoris* — Sevastyán Seredá, private — of what regiment? However, don't write down, *moritur*. Take him away," said the doctor, walking away from the soldier, who was rolling his eyes, and having the rattle in his throat.

About forty soldiers of the ambulance, waiting for the loads of the dressed to be taken to the hospital, and of the dead to the chapel, were standing at the door, and, silently, now and then sighing, were looking at this spectacle.

IX.

On his way to the bastion, Kalúgin met many wounded soldiers. Knowing from experience how badly such a spectacle affects in an engagement a man's spirit, he not only did not stop to question them, but, on the contrary, endeavoured not to pay the least attention to them. At the foot of the hill he came across an orderly, who was galloping at full speed from the bastion.

"Zóbkin, Zóbkin! Stop a minute!"

"Well, what is it?"

"Where do you come from?"

"From the lodgments."

"Well, how is it there? hot?"

"Oh, terrible!"

And the orderly galloped away.

Indeed, although there were few volleys of musketry, the cannonade began with renewed vim and fury.

"Oh, it is bad!" thought Kalúgin, experiencing a certain disagreeable sensation, and he, too, had a presentiment, that is, a very common thought, — the thought of death. But Kalúgin was egoistical and endowed with wooden nerves, in short, he was what is called brave. He did not succumb to his first sentiment, and began to encourage himself; he thought of a certain adjutant, of Napoleon's, I think, who, having transmitted his orders, galloped up at full speed to Napoleon, with bleeding head.

"*Vous êtes blessé!*" said Napoleon to him. "*Je vous demande pardon, sire, je suis mort,*" and the adjutant fell down from his horse, and expired on the spot.

This incident seemed very nice to him, and he imagined himself a little that adjutant; then he struck his horse with the whip, and assumed a still more dashing Cossack attitude, looked back at the Cossack, who, standing in his stirrups, was galloping behind him, and arrived as a valiant soldier at the place where he had to dismount from his horse. Here he found four soldiers, who were sitting on some stones, and smoking their pipes.

"What are you doing here?" he shouted to them.

"We have taken away a wounded man, your Honour, and so we are taking a little rest," answered one of them, hiding his pipe behind his back, and doffing his cap.

"Taking a rest, eh? March to your places!"

He walked with them along the trench, up the hill, meeting wounded soldiers at every step. When he had reached the top, he turned to the left, and, having taken a few steps in that direction, suddenly found himself alone. A splinter whizzed by close to him, and struck into the trench. Another bomb rose in front of him, and, it seemed, was flying straight upon him. All at once he felt terribly: he raced forward about five steps, and lay down flat on the ground. When the bomb exploded some distance away from him, he was dreadfully mortified, and he got up and looked around, to see whether anybody had noticed his fall; but nobody was near.

When terror once enters your soul, it does not easily give way to another sensation. Having always boasted of never bending, he now walked up the trench with hurried step, and almost in a creeping posture. "Ah, it is bad!" he thought, stumbling, "I shall certainly be killed," and, feeling how heavily he was breathing, and how the perspiration stood out on his whole body, he was amazed at himself, but no longer tried to overcome his feeling.

Suddenly somebody's steps were heard in front of him. He immediately straightened up, raised his head, and, briskly clanking his sabre, went ahead with less hurried

step. He did not recognize himself. When he came upon an officer of sappers and a sailor, who were walking toward him, and the first called out to him, "Lie down!" pointing to the bright point of a bomb, which, approaching brighter and brighter, and faster and faster, struck the ground near the trench, he involuntarily bent his head a little, under the influence of the terrified voice, and walked on.

"What a brave fellow!" said the sailor, who was calmly watching the falling bomb, and with an experienced eye at once figured out that its splinters could not reach the trench. "He does not even want to lie down."

There were but a few paces left for Kalúgin to make across the small square, up to the blindage of the commander of the bastion, when he was again overcome by darkness and a foolish terror; his heart beat more strongly, the blood rushed to his head, and he had to exert an effort over himself, in order to run as far as the blindage.

"Why are you so out of breath?" said the general, when he communicated the orders to him.

"I was walking very fast, your Excellency!"

"Don't you want a glass of wine?"

Kalúgin drank a glass of wine, and lighted a cigarette. The engagement was over; only a heavy cannonade was kept up on both sides. In the blindage sat General N——, the commander of the bastion, and some six other officers, among whom was also Praskúkhin, and they were discussing various details of the action. Sitting in this cosy room, with its blue wall-paper, with a divan, a bed, a table, on which lay papers, with a clock and an image, before which a lamp was burning; looking at these signs of life, and at the huge yard beams, of which the ceiling was formed; and listening to the cannonading, which in the blindage appeared feeble, Kalúgin absolutely could not comprehend how it was he had allowed himself twice to be overcome by such an unpardonable weakness. He

was angry with himself, and he was anxious for some danger, in order to test himself.

"I am glad you are here, captain," he said to a naval officer, in the overcoat of an officer of the staff, with long moustache and the Cross of St. George, who had just entered into the blindage, to ask the general for some workmen to mend in his battery two embrasures which had caved in. "The general has ordered me to find out," continued Kalúgin, when the commander of the battery was through with the general, "whether your ordnance can discharge canister-shot along the trench?"

"Only one gun will do it," the captain replied, gloomily.

"Still, let us go and look."

The captain frowned, and angrily cleared his throat.

"I have been standing there all night, and have come away to take a little rest," he said. "Can't you go down yourself? My assistant, Lieutenant Karts, is there, and he will show you around."

The captain had for six months commanded this, one of the most perilous batteries, and had passed his time uninterruptedly in the bastion, ever since the beginning of the siege, when as yet there were no blindages, and he had among sailors a reputation for bravery. Consequently his refusal startled and surprised Kalúgin. "A fine reputation!" he thought.

"Well, then I will go by myself, if you will permit," he said, in a slightly derisive tone, to the captain, who, however, did not pay the least attention to his words.

Kalúgin did not consider that he had at different times, taken all together, passed fifty hours in the bastions, whereas the captain had lived there for six months. Kalúgin was urged on by vanity, by the desire to shine, by the hope of earning a reward and a reputation, and by the charm of the risk, while the captain had long passed through all that: at first he had been vain, had done daring deeds, courted danger, hoped for rewards and for

a reputation, and even had obtained them, but now all these impelling causes had lost their power with him, and he looked at matters quite differently. He promptly executed his duties, but comprehending well how very few chances of life there were left for him, after six months in the bastion, he no longer risked these chances without imperative necessity, so that the young lieutenant, who had joined the battery about a week ago, and who now was showing Kalúgin around, unnecessarily vying with him in thrusting his head forward through the embrasures and walking out on the banquettes, seemed ten times more brave than the captain.

Having inspected the battery, Kalúgin, on his way back to the blindage, stumbled in the darkness on the general, who with his orderlies was going to the watch-tower.

"Captain Praskúkhin!" said the general, "please go down to the right lodgment, and tell the second battalion of the M—— regiment, who are working there, to leave the work, and to walk away noiselessly and join their regiment, which is standing in reserve at the foot of the hill— You understand? Take them yourself down to the regiment."

"Yes, sir!"

Praskúkhin ran at full gallop to the lodgment.

The firing was growing less frequent.

X.

"Is this the second battalion of the M—— regiment?" asked Praskúkhin, having reached the place, and stumbling against soldiers who were carrying dirt in bags.

"Yes, sir."

"Where is the commander?"

Surmising that the commander of the company was wanted, Mikháylov crawled out of his pit, and, taking Praskúkhin for the chief, he went up to him, with his hand at his visor.

"The general has commanded — you — please go — as fast as possible — and, above all, softly — back — no, not back, but to the reserve," said Praskúkhin, looking askance in the direction of the enemy's fires.

Having recognized Praskúkhin, dropping his hand, and having grasped the whole matter, Mikháylov gave the order, and the soldiers of the battalion began to stir, to pick up their muskets, to put on their overcoats, and to move.

He who has not experienced it cannot form an idea of the pleasure which a man feels when he leaves, after three hours of bombardment, such a perilous place as the lodgments. In these three hours Mikháylov had more than once, not without reason, regarded his end as inevitable, and he had become accustomed to his conviction that he should certainly be killed, and that he no longer belonged to this world. And yet it cost him a great effort to keep his legs from running, when he left the lodgments at the head of his company, abreast with Praskúkhin.

"Good-bye!" said to him a major, the commander of another battalion that was to remain in the lodgments, and with whom he had shared the cheese, while sitting in the pit, near the breastworks. "I wish you a happy journey!"

"And I wish you luck in your position. It seems, it has quieted down now."

But no sooner had he said this than the enemy, evidently having noticed the motion in the lodgments, began to fire oftener and oftener. Our men began to return the fire, and a furious cannonading began once more. The stars were shining high, but not brilliantly. The night was pitch-dark; only the flashes from the volleys and the exploding bombs momentarily lighted up things. The soldiers walked fast in silence, and involuntarily raced with each other; between the uninterrupted peals of the cannonade nothing was heard but the even sound of the steps on the dry road, the clattering of the bayonets, or the sigh and prayer of some soldier, "O Lord, O Lord, what is this?" Now and then could be heard the groan of a wounded man, and the cries, "The stretcher!" (In the company which Mikháylov commanded, twenty-six men were put out of action by one artillery fire.) There was a flash on the distant gloomy horizon, the sentry cried from the bastion, "Can-non!" and a ball, whizzing above the company, tore up the ground and scattered stones.

"The devil take it! How slowly they are walking," thought Praskúkhin, continually looking back, as he walked at Mikháylov's side. "Truly, I had better run ahead. I have transmitted the order — Still, no; they might later say that I am a coward! Come what may, I will walk with them."

"Why does he keep at my side?" thought Mikháylov, for his part. "So far as I have observed, he always brings misfortune. There it flies, straight upon us, it seems."

Having made a few hundred steps, they stumbled on

Kalúgin, who, briskly clattering his sabre, was walking to the lodgments, in order to find out, by the general's command, how the works were proceeding there. But, when he met Mikháylov, he thought that, rather than go himself under this terrible fire, which, besides, he had not been ordered to do, he would get the details from an officer who had been there. Indeed, Mikháylov told him everything about the works. Having walked a short distance with him, Kalúgin turned into the trench which led to the blindage.

"Well, what is the news?" asked an officer who was sitting all alone in the room, at supper.

"Nothing. It seems, there will be no further engagement."

"How not? On the contrary, the general has just gone once more to the watch-tower. Another regiment has come. There it is — you hear? Again the musketry fire. Don't go. Why should you?" added the officer, noticing the motion which Kalúgin had made.

"By rights I ought certainly to be there," thought Kalúgin, "but I have to-day exposed myself enough to danger; it is a terrible fire."

"That's so, I will wait for them here," he said.

And, indeed, some twenty minutes later the general returned with the officers who were about him; among them was also Yunker Baron Pest, but not Praskúkhin. The attack had been repulsed, and the lodgments were occupied by us.

Having received the exact information, Kalúgin walked away with Pest from the blindage.

XI.

"Your overcoat is bloody; have you really taken part in the hand-to-hand fight?" Kalúgin asked him.

"Oh, it is terrible! Just imagine — "

And Pest began to tell how he had led his company, how the commander of the company had been killed, how he had stabbed a Frenchman, and how the affair would have been lost, if it had not been for him.

The foundation for the story, that the commander of the company had been killed, and that Pest himself had killed a Frenchman, was true; but, in giving the details, the yunker was drawing on his imagination and bragging.

He was involuntarily bragging, because during the whole action he was moving in such a mist and oblivion that everything which had occurred seemed to him to have occurred somewhere, at some time, and with somebody. He very naturally tried to reconstruct these details advantageously to himself. This is the way it really happened:

The battalion to which the yunker had been detailed for the sortie had been for a couple of hours under fire near a wall; then the commander of the battalion in front said something, — the commanders of the companies began to stir, the battalion moved, emerged from behind the breastworks, and, having walked about one hundred paces, stopped, and drew up in company columns. Pest was ordered to take up a position on the right flank of the second company.

Without being able to give himself an account where

he was, or why, the yunker took up his position, and, with bated breath and with a cold chill running down his spine, unconsciously gazed into the distance ahead of him, expecting something terrible to happen. However, he did not feel so frightened, for there was no firing then, but he felt strange and queer, when he reflected that he was outside the fortress, in the field. Again the commander of the battalion in front said something. Again the officers uttered something in whispers, as they communicated their orders, and the black wall of the first company suddenly crouched. The order was given to lie down flat. The second company, too, lay down, and Pest, in getting down, pricked his hand against some thorny plant. The commander of the second company was the only one who did not lie down. His short figure, with the unsheathed sword, which he kept waving, moved up and down in front of the company, talking all the time.

"Boys! Show yourselves brave fellows, I tell you! Don't fire your guns, but run the canaille down with your bayonets! When I shout 'Hurrah!' you after me, and no standing back — The main thing is — all as one — we will give a good account of ourselves, we won't bungle! Hey, boys? For the Tsar, our father!"

"What is the name of the commander of your company?" Pest asked a yunker who was lying abreast with him. "What a brave fellow!"

"Yes, as always before an action —" answered the yunker. "His name is Lisinkóvski."

At this moment, there was a sudden flash right in front of the company; there was a terrible roar which deafened the whole company; high up in the air stones and splinters rustled (it was at least fifty seconds later that a stone fell from above and broke a soldier's leg). It was a bomb from an elevation gun, and the fact that it struck the company proved that the French had observed the column.

"Go ahead with your bombs! Just let us get at you, and you will feel the three-edged Russian bayonet, accursed one!" cried the commander of the company, so loud that the commander of the battalion was compelled to order him to keep quiet and be less noisy.

Immediately after this, the first company rose, and then the second. They were ordered to fix their bayonets, and the battalion advanced. Pest was so terrified that he was absolutely unconscious of time and place, and of what was going on. He moved like a drunken man. Then suddenly a million fires flashed on all sides, and there was a ping and a crash. He shouted and ran somewhere, because everybody else was running and shouting. Then he stumbled and fell down on something. It was the commander of the company, who had been wounded at the head of his company, and who seized the yunker's leg, taking him for a Frenchman. Then when he had torn his leg away and had got up, a man reeled back against him and almost knocked him down once more; another man cried, "Stab him! What are you gazing at?" Somebody took the gun, and ran the bayonet through something soft. "*Ah Dieu!*" somebody cried in a terrible, penetrating voice, and it was only then that Pest comprehended that he had transfixed a Frenchman. Cold sweat stood out on his body, he shuddered, as in an ague, and he threw down the gun. But this lasted but a moment; it immediately occurred to him that he was a hero. He grasped his gun, and, crying "Hurrah!" ran with the throng away from the killed Frenchman. After running some twenty paces, he arrived at the trench. There were our men and the commander of the battalion.

"I have stabbed one!" he said to the commander of the battalion.

"You are a brave fellow, baron!"

XII.

"Do you know, Praskúkhin has been killed," said Pest, accompanying Kalúgin, who was going home.

"Impossible!"

"Most certainly. I have seen him myself."

"Good-bye! I must hurry."

"I am well satisfied," thought Kalúgin, on his way back. "For the first time a bit of luck, while I am the officer of the day. It is a fine affair! I am alive and hale; there will be a fine report, and I shall assuredly get a gold sword. And I deserve it."

Having reported to the general all that was necessary, he went to his room, to which Prince Gáltsin had returned long ago, in expectation of him; he was reading a book which he had found on Kalúgin's table.

It gave Kalúgin remarkable pleasure to feel himself at home and out of danger. Having donned his night-gown and lain down on the bed, he told Gáltsin all the particulars of the engagement, narrating them, naturally, from a point of view from which these details would prove that he, Kalúgin, was a very fine and brave officer; this, it seems to me, it was superfluous to hint at, because all knew that anyway, and had no right and no cause to doubt it, unless, perhaps, the deceased Captain Praskúkhin, who, though he had regarded it as a privilege to link arms with Kalúgin, had only the day before told a friend of his in secret that Kalúgin was a nice man, but that, between you and me, he hated dreadfully to go to the bastions.

Praskúkhin, who was walking abreast with Mikháylov, had just left Kalúgin, and was beginning to revive a little, as he approached a less dangerous spot, when he saw a flash gleaming brightly behind him, and heard the shout of the sentry, "Mortar!" and the words of one of the soldiers walking behind, "It will fly straight to the bastion!"

Mikháylov looked back. The bright point of the bomb had just stopped in his zenith, when by its position it was impossible to determine its direction. But this lasted only a moment: faster and faster, nearer and nearer, so that the sparks of the fuse could be seen and the fatal whistling could be heard, the bomb was settling down straight over the battalion.

"Lie down," cried somebody's voice.

Mikháylov and Praskúkhin lay down on the ground. Praskúkhin closed his eyes and only heard the bomb's thud against the hard earth near by. A second passed, — it seemed an hour, — and the bomb did not explode. Praskúkhin was frightened: had he been cowardly for nothing? Maybe the bomb had fallen some distance off, and he only imagined that the fuse was hissing near him. He opened his eyes, and it gave him pleasure to see Mikháylov lying near his very feet, motionless on the ground. Just then his eyes for a moment met the burning fuse of the bomb spinning around within three feet from him.

Cold terror, which excluded all other thoughts and feelings, — terror seized his whole being. He covered his face with his hands.

Another second passed, — a second during which the whole world of feeling, thoughts, hopes, and recollections flashed through his imagination.

"Whom will it kill, — me or Mikháylov? or both of us? And if me, where will it be? In the head, — then all is ended; but if in the leg, they will amputate it, and

I will insist on their giving me chloroform, and I may still live. And, maybe, it will kill only Mikháylov: then I will tell how we walked abreast, and how I was bespattered by blood, when he was killed. No, it is nearer to me — I will be the man!"

Here he thought of the twelve roubles which he was owing Mikháylov, and of another debt in St. Petersburg, which he ought to have paid long ago; the gipsy melody which he had sung the night before passed through his mind. The woman whom he had loved appeared before his imagination in a cap with lilac ribbons; he recalled a man who had insulted him five years before, and whose insult he had not yet avenged, — though inseparably from these and from a thousand other recollections, the feeling of the present, the expectation of death, did not leave him for an instant.

"Still it may not burst," he thought, and, with desperate determination, wished to open his eyes. But at this moment, even while his lids were closed, his eyes were startled by a red fire; with a terrible crash something struck his chest; he ran, tripped over his sabre, which was dangling between his legs, and fell on his side.

"Thank God! I am only contused," was his first thought, and he wanted to touch his breast with his hands; but his arms felt as though fettered, and his head was as if in a vise. In his eyes flashed the soldiers, and unconsciously he counted them: "One, two, three, soldiers; and the one with his overcoat rolled under him is an officer," he thought. Then a lightning flashed in his eyes, and he was wondering what it was they were firing, — a mortar or a cannon. Then they fired again; and there were more soldiers: five, six, seven soldiers passed by. He was suddenly horrified at the thought that they might crush him. He wanted to cry out that he was bruised; but his mouth was so parched that his tongue cleaved to the palate, and terrible thirst tormented him.

He felt that it was wet near his breast; this sensation of wetness reminded him of water, and he wanted to drink even that which caused that moisture.

"I must have abrased the flesh as I fell," he thought, and, beginning more and more to succumb to the fear that the soldiers, who continued flashing past him, would crush him, he collected all his strength, and wanted to shout, "Take me!" But instead of this he groaned so terribly that he was horrified at the sound he himself made. Then some red fires leaped in his eyes, — and he thought that the soldiers were putting rocks on him; the fires leaped about ever less frequently, and the rocks pressed him more and more. He made an effort to push aside the rocks, and he no longer saw, nor heard, nor thought, nor felt. He had been instantly killed by a splinter that had struck his chest.

XIII.

When Mikháylov saw the bomb, he fell to the ground, and in the two seconds during which the bomb lay unexploded, he, like Praskúkhin, thought and felt immeasurably much. He mentally prayed to God, and kept repeating, "Thy will be done! What made me go into military service?" and at the same time he thought: "And there I have gone over to the infantry, in order to take part in the campaign. Would it not have been better if I had remained in the regiment of uhlans in the city of T——, and passed my time with my friend Natásha? And this is what I have instead!" And he began to count: "One, two, three, four," making up his mind that if it exploded on an even number, he would live, but if on an uneven number, he would be killed. "Everything is ended; I am killed," he thought, when the bomb exploded (he forgot whether it was on an even or on an uneven number), and he felt a blow and a severe pain in his head. "O Lord, forgive me my sins!" he said, swaying his hands, and he rose, and fell down senseless on his back.

His first sensation, when he awoke, was that of blood flowing down his nose, and a pain in his head, which was growing fainter. "My soul is departing," he thought, "and what will it be there? O Lord, receive my soul in peace! But one thing is strange," he reflected; "namely, that, dying, I so clearly hear the steps of the soldiers, and the sounds of firing."

"A stretcher, ho, there, — the captain has been killed!" cried over his head a voice, which he involuntarily recognized as that of his drummer Ignátev.

Somebody took him by the shoulders. He tried to open his eyes, and saw overhead the dark-blue sky, groups of stars, and two bombs flying above him, and overtaking each other; he saw Ignátev, the soldiers with the stretcher and their guns, the rampart, the trenches, and suddenly persuaded himself that he was not yet in the other world.

He was lightly wounded in the head by a stone. His very first impression was like regret: he had so well and so calmly prepared himself for his transition to the other world, that he was unpleasantly affected by his return to reality, with its bombs, trenches, and blood; his second impression was an unconscious joy that he was alive, and his third, a desire to get away from the bastion as quickly as possible. The drummer tied his commander's head with a handkerchief, and, supporting him, led him to the ambulance.

"Whither am I going, and wherefore?" thought the staff-captain, when he had collected his senses a little. "My duty is to stay with the company, and not to go ahead, the more so since the company will soon be out of the firing line," a voice whispered to him.

"It is not necessary, my friend," he said, pulling his arm away from the obliging drummer. "I am not going to the ambulance; I will stay with the company."

And he turned back.

"Your Honour, it would be better if you had your wound dressed properly," said Ignátev. "In the heat of the moment, you may think it of no significance; and it might get worse. And this is such a hot place, — really, your Honour!"

Mikháylov hesitated for a moment, and would have followed Ignátev's advice, if he had not suddenly thought

of the many severely wounded at the ambulance. "It may be the doctors will only laugh at my scratch," thought the staff-captain, and resolutely, in spite of the drummer's persuasion, he went back to his company.

"Where is Orderly Praskúkhin, who was walking with me?" he asked the ensign who was leading the company when they met.

"I do not know — I think he was killed," the ensign replied, reluctantly.

"Killed or wounded? How is it you do not know? Was he not going with us? And why did you not take him?"

"There was no time for that, the place was so hot!"

"How could you do it, Mikhaíl Iványch?" said Mikháylov, angrily. "How could you abandon him, if he was alive; and even if he has been killed, his body ought to have been taken along."

"How can he be alive, when I tell you that I went up myself and took a look at him!" said the ensign. "Really, I am satisfied if I can get my men away. Look at the canaille! They are now discharging cannon-balls at us," he added.

Mikháylov sat down, and clasped his head, which began to pain him terribly from the motion.

"No, we ought to go down and fetch him. Maybe he is still alive," said Mikháylov. "It is our duty, Mikhaíl Iványch!"

Mikhaíl Iványch made no reply.

"He did not take him at the time, and now I must send the soldiers by themselves. But how am I to send them? Under this terrible fire they will only be uselessly killed," thought Mikháylov.

"Boys! We ought to go back, and pick up the officer who lies wounded there in the ditch," he said, neither very loudly, nor imperatively, for he felt that it would be disagreeable for the soldiers to execute this order, —

and, indeed, since he did not address any one in particular, no one stepped forward to carry it out.

"On the other hand, he may be dead, and then it is not worth while to subject my men to useless danger; I am the only one to be blamed for having neglected him. I will go there myself, and find out whether he is alive. That is my duty," said Mikháylov to himself.

"Mikhaíl Iványch! you lead the company, and I will catch up with you," he said, and, raising his overcoat with one hand, and with the other continually fingering the image of St. Mitrofáni, in whom he had special faith, he ran at full speed up the trench.

Having convinced himself that Praskúkhin was dead, Mikháylov dragged himself back, breathing heavily, and holding with his hand the loosened bandage and his head, which now began to pain him severely. The battalion was already in its place at the foot of the hill, and almost beyond the firing line, when Mikháylov caught up with them. I say, almost beyond the firing line, because now and then a stray bomb reached even this place.

"To-morrow I must go down to the ambulance to register," thought the staff-captain, while the surgeon's assistant was dressing his wound.

XIV.

HUNDREDS of blood-stained bodies of men, who two hours before had been full of all sorts of elevated and petty hopes and desires, were now lying with stark limbs on the dew-covered, blooming valley, which separated the bastion from the trench, and on the even floor of the chapel for the dead in Sevastopol; hundreds of men, with curses and prayers on their parched lips, were creeping, rolling around, and groaning, some between the corpses in the blooming valley, others on stretchers, on cots, and on the blood-stained floor of the ambulance! And just as in former days gleamed the morning glow over Mount Sapún, paled the twinkling stars, rose a white mist from the dark, roaring sea, crimsoned the dawn in the east, scudded the long purple cloudlets along the bright azure horizon, and just as in former days swam out the mighty, beautiful luminary, portending joy, love, and happiness to all living things.

XV.

On the following evening the music of the chasseurs again was playing in the boulevard, and again officers, yunkers, soldiers, and young women strolled leisurely near the pavilion, and along the lower avenues of blooming, fragrant white acacias.

Kalúgin, Prince Gáltsin, and a colonel were walking with linked arms near the pavilion, and discussing the engagement of the previous night. The guiding thread of the conversation was, as it always is in similar cases, not the engagement itself, but the part which each had taken in the engagement. Their faces and the sounds of their voices were expressive of solemnity, even sadness, as though the losses of the day before powerfully affected and grieved them; but in truth, since none of them had lost a very close friend, this expression of sadness was merely of an official nature, a something which they regarded it as their duty to evince. On the contrary, Kalúgin and the colonel would have been delighted to see such an engagement every day, if they could earn every day a gold sabre and a major-generalship, even though they were very nice people. I like to hear a conqueror, who, to satisfy his ambition, leads millions to destruction, called a monster. But get the confession of Ensign Petrushóv and of Sub-Lieutenant Antónov, and so forth; every one of them is a Napoleon in miniature, a monster in miniature, and forthwith ready to start a battle, to kill a hundred people, merely to get an additional star, or one-third additional pay.

"No, you must pardon me," said the colonel, "it began at first on the left flank. I was there."

"Perhaps," replied Kalúgin. "I was chiefly in the right flank; I went there twice: once, to find the general, and the second time, for no special reason, just to look at the lodgments. It was a hot place, I tell you."

"I am sure Kalúgin knows," Prince Gáltsin said to the colonel. "Do you know, V—— told me to-day about you. He said you were a gallant officer."

"But the losses, the losses were terrible," said the colonel. "In my regiment four hundred men were put out of action. I marvel how it is I got away from there alive."

Just then, at the other end of the boulevard and coming toward these gentlemen, appeared the form of Mikháylov with his head bandaged.

"Are you wounded, captain?" said Kalúgin.

"Yes, a little, from a stone," answered Mikháylov.

"*Est-ce que le pavillon est baissé déjà?*" asked Prince Gáltsin, glancing at the staff-captain's cap, and addressing no one in particular.

"*Non, pas encore,*" replied Mikháylov, wishing to show that he knew how to speak French.

"Are they still having a truce?" said Gáltsin, addressing him in Russian, as much as to say, so the staff-captain thought, "It will, no doubt, be hard for you to speak French, so would it not be better to talk to you simply?" And, with this, the adjutants went away from him. The staff-captain felt exceedingly lonely, just as on the day before, and, exchanging greetings with various gentlemen, — some he did not care to meet, others he could not make up his mind to approach, — sat down near the monument of Kazárski, and lighted a cigarette.

Baron Pest, too, came to the boulevard. He said that he had been present at the truce, that he had spoken with some French officers, and that one French officer had

said to him, "If it had been dark another half-hour, the lodgments would have been retaken," and that he had answered him, "Monsieur! I shall not deny it, in order not to accuse you of a falsehood," and how well that was said, and so on.

In reality, though he had been present at the truce, he had had no chance to say there anything in particular, no matter how anxious he had been to talk to the French (for it is so jolly to talk with Frenchmen). Yunker Baron Pest had walked up and down the line for quite awhile, asking the Frenchmen who were near him, "Of what regiment are you?" to which they answered him, and that was all. But when he went a little too far into the line, a French sentry, who did not suspect that this soldier knew any French, cursed him in the third person: "That accursed one is coming to look at our works." Finding nothing of interest at the truce, Yunker Baron Pest rode home, and on his way back thought out the French phrases which he was now telling. On the boulevard were also Captain Zótov, who was talking in a loud voice, and Captain Obzhógov, dishevelled in appearance, and an artillery captain, who did not seek anybody's favour, and a yunker, fortunate in love, and all the persons of the day before, and all of them with the same eternal impulses. There was only lacking Praskúkhin, Neférdov, and some others, whom hardly any one now remembered, or thought of, though their bodies had not yet been washed, attired, and buried in the ground.

XVI.

In our bastion and in the French trench are floating white flags, and between them, in the blooming valley, lie in heaps, without boots, in gray and blue uniforms, the disfigured corpses, which workmen are carrying away and placing on wagons. The odour of corpses fills the air. From Sevastopol and from the French camp, masses of people have poured out to behold this spectacle, and with eager and benign curiosity they rush toward each other.

Let us hear what these people are saying one to another.

Here, in a circle of Russians and Frenchmen, who have gathered around him, a youthful officer, speaking poor though intelligible French, is looking at a cartridge-box of the guards.

"What is this bird for?"

"Because it is a cartridge-box of a regiment of the guards, sir, which bears the imperial eagle."

"And are you of the guards?"

"Pardon, sir, I am of the sixth of the line."

"And this — where bought?" asks the officer, pointing to a yellow, wooden cigar-holder, in which the Frenchman is smoking a cigarette.

"At Balakláva, sir! It is not much, just of palm-wood."

"Pretty!" says the officer, being guided in his conversation, not so much by his wishes, as by the words which he chances to know.

"If you will have the kindness to keep this as a memento of this meeting, you will oblige me."

And the polite Frenchman blows out the cigarette, and hands the cigar-holder to the officer, with a slight bow. The officer gives him his, and all persons in the group, both Frenchmen and Russians, seem to be very much pleased, and smile.

Then a dashing infantryman, in pink shirt, and overcoat hanging over his shoulders, in company with other soldiers, who, with their hands behind their backs, with merry, curious faces, stand behind him, walks up to a Frenchman, and asks for a light for his pipe. The Frenchman takes a few puffs, pokes his little pipe, and pours some burning tobacco on the Russian's.

"Tobacco *boun*," says the soldier in the pink shirt, and the spectators smile.

"Yes, good tobacco, Turkish tobacco," says the Frenchman. "And with you, Russian tobacco? Good?"

"Russian *boun*," says the soldier in the pink shirt, whereat the crowd roll with laughter. "French not *boun, bon jour, moussié!*" says the soldier in the pink shirt, discharging at once his whole supply of linguistic knowledge, and tapping the Frenchman's abdomen, and all laugh. The Frenchmen laugh, too.

"They are no beauties, those stupid Russians," says a zouave in the throng of Frenchmen.

"What are they laughing about?" says another, a swarthy fellow, with an Italian pronunciation, coming up to our soldiers.

"Caftan *boun*," says the dashing soldier, examining the embroidered coat-skirts of the zouave, and again they laugh.

"Don't walk out of your line, back to your places, *sacré nom!*" shouts a French corporal, and the soldiers disperse in obvious displeasure.

And here, in a circle of French officers, our young

cavalry officer is making himself conspicuous. They are talking about a certain Count Sazónov, "whom I used to know well, sir," says a French officer with one epaulet, "he is one of those real Russian counts, such as we love."

"There is a Sazónov, whom I used to know," says the cavalryman, "but he is no count, so far as I know. He is a short, dark-complexioned man, about your age."

"That's it, sir, that's he. Oh, how I would like to see that dear count. If you see him, please give him my regards. Captain Latour," he says, bowing.

"Is not this a terrible business we are in? It was hot work last night, was it not?" says the cavalryman, trying to keep up the conversation, and pointing to the dead bodies.

"Oh, sir, it is terrible! But what brave fellows your soldiers are, what brave fellows! It is a pleasure to fight with such brave soldiers."

"I must confess yours are themselves up to snuff," says the cavalryman, bowing, and imagining that he is a really clever fellow.

Enough of that.

Let us rather look at this ten-year-old boy, who, in an old cap, no doubt his father's, in shoes worn on bare feet, and in nankeen trousers, held up by one suspender, had gone beyond the rampart at the very beginning of the truce, and has all the time been walking through the ravine, looking with dull curiosity at the French and at the dead bodies lying on the ground, and collecting wild blue flowers, with which this valley is strewn. On his way home with a large nosegay, he, closing his nose against the odour which the wind is wafting to him, stops near a heap of piled up bodies, and for a long time gazes at one headless corpse, which is nearest to him. After standing for awhile, he moves up and touches with his foot the outstretched stiff arm of the corpse. The hand shakes a little. He touches it a second time, a little

more boldly. The hand shakes again, and stops in the old place. The boy suddenly shrieks, hides his face in the flowers, and runs away to the fortress at full speed.

Yes, in the fortress and in the trench float white flags; the blooming valley is filled with dead bodies; the fair sun descends toward the blue sea; and the blue sea, billowing, glitters under the golden rays of the sun. Thousands of people are crowding, looking, talking, and smiling to each other. And will not these people, — these Christians who profess one great religion of love and renunciation, — seeing what they have done, suddenly kneel down in repentance before Him who, having given them life, has implanted in the soul of every one, together with the terror of death, the love of goodness and beauty? And will they not embrace each other as brothers, with tears of joy and happiness? The white flags are put away, and again the instruments of death and suffering shriek, again flows innocent blood, and are heard groans and curses.

I have said what I had intended to say this time. But I am assailed by heavy doubt. Perhaps I ought not to have said this; perhaps that which I have said belongs to one of those evil truths which, lurking unconsciously in each soul, ought not to be proclaimed, in order not to become noxious, like the dregs of wine, which must not be shaken, lest it be spoiled.

Where is the expression of evil which one must avoid? Where is the expression of goodness in this narrative which should be emulated? Who is its villain, and who its hero? All are good, and all are bad.

Neither Kalúgin, with his brilliant bravery, *bravoure de gentilhomme*, and his vanity, prime mover of all his actions, nor Praskúkhin, an empty-headed, harmless man, though fallen on the field of battle for his faith, his throne, and his country, nor Mikháylov, with his bashfulness, nor

Pest, a child without firm convictions and rules, can be the villains or the heroes of the narrative.

The hero of my narrative, whom I love with all the powers of my soul, whom I have endeavoured to reproduce in all his beauty, and who has always been, who is, and always will be beautiful, is truth.

IN AUGUST, 1855

I.

Toward the end of August, an officer's vehicle (that peculiar vehicle, not to be met with elsewhere, which forms something intermediate between a Jewish calash, a Russian cart, and a hamper-wagon) was driving at a walk through the dense, hot dust of the Sevastopol highway, which runs through a ravine between Duvánka and Bakhchisaráy.

In the front of the vehicle squatted an orderly, in a nankeen coat and what had formerly been an officer's cap, but now was crushed into a soft shape, pulling at the reins; behind, on bundles and bales covered with a soldier's mantle, sat an infantry officer in a summer overcoat. The officer was, so far as one could judge of him in his sitting posture, not very tall of stature, but exceedingly broad, and that not so much from shoulder to shoulder, as from his breast to his back; he was broad and stocky, and his neck and nape were well developed and puffed up. A waist, that is, a recess in the middle of his body, he did not have, nor was there any belly; on the contrary, he was rather spare, particularly in the face, which was covered by an unhealthy sallow sunburn. His face would have been handsome but for a certain bloated appearance and the large soft wrinkles, not of old age,

which flowed together and magnified his features, and gave the whole countenance an expression of staleness and coarseness. His eyes were small, hazel, exceedingly vivacious, even bold; his moustache very thick, but not broad, and gnawed at the ends; and his chin, and particularly his cheeks, were covered with an exceedingly heavy, thick black beard of two days' standing.

The officer had been wounded on the 10th of May by a splinter in his head, on which he was still wearing a bandage, and now, having felt completely well for a week, he was returning from the hospital at Simferopol to his regiment, which was stationed somewhere in the direction from which the firing was heard, — but whether in Sevastopol itself, on the Northern side, or at Inkerman, he had not been able to get any reliable information.

The firing was heard very distinctly, frequently, and, it seemed, very close, particularly whenever the mountains were not in the way, or the wind carried the sounds. Now it appeared as though an explosion were shaking the whole air, and causing him to tremble involuntarily; now less loud sounds followed each other in rapid succession, like the roll of a drum, interrupted now and then by a sharp roar; or everything blended into crackling peals, resembling the thunderclaps, when the storm is at its worst, and the rain has just started down in sheets. Everybody was saying that the bombardment was terrible, and so, indeed, it appeared from the sound.

The officer urged his orderly to drive faster: he evidently wanted to get there as soon as possible. On the way they met a large caravan of Russian peasant carts that had taken provision to Sevastopol, and that now were returning, loaded with sick and wounded soldiers in gray overcoats, sailors in black cloaks, volunteers in red fezes, and reserve militiamen with beards. The officer's vehicle was compelled to stop in the dense, immovable cloud of dust raised by the caravan, and the

officer, blinking and scowling from the dust which filled his eyes and ears, glanced at the faces of the sick and the wounded, who were moving past him.

"That feeble soldier is from our company," said the orderly, turning to his master, and pointing to a cart filled with wounded men, which had just come abreast of them.

In the front of the cart sat in a sideways posture a long-bearded Russian, in a lambskin cap. Holding the butt of his whip with his elbow, he was plaiting the lash. Behind him five or six soldiers were jostled in all kinds of attitudes in the bed of the wagon. One, with his arm in a sling, with his overcoat thrown over his shirt, though pale and haggard, was sitting upright in the middle of the vehicle; he put his hand to his cap, when he saw the officer, but, evidently recalling that he was wounded, he pretended to be scratching his head. Another, alongside him, was lying in the bottom of the cart; all that was visible were his two hands with which he held on to the rounds of the cart, and his raised knees that swayed in all directions like mops. The third, with a bloated face and bandaged head, over which towered a soldier-cap, was sitting toward one side, with his feet dangling down to the wheel, and, leaning with his arms on his knees, seemed to be dozing. It was to him that the travelling officer directed his speech.

"Dólzhnikov!" he cried.

"I!" answered the soldier, opening his eyes and doffing his cap, and speaking in a thick staccato bass, as though some twenty soldiers were shouting all at once.

"When were you wounded, my friend?"

The leaden, suffused eyes of the soldier became animated; he had obviously recognized his officer.

"I wish you health, your Honour!" he uttered, in the same staccato bass.

"Where is the regiment stationed now?"

"They were standing in Sevastopol, and they were to move on Wednesday, your Honour."

"Whither?"

"I don't know — probably on the Northern side, your Honour! To-day, your Honour," he added in a drawling voice, putting on his cap, "he has begun to shoot straight across, mostly bombs, and they are carried as far as the bay; the firing is awful to-day, and — "

Further it was not possible to hear what the soldier was saying; but by his face and pose one could see that he was telling disheartening things, with the malice of a suffering man.

The travelling officer, Lieutenant Kozeltsóv, was an officer out of the ordinary. He was not one of those who live so or so, and do so or so, because others are living and doing so; he did everything which pleased him best, and others followed his example, and were convinced that it was good. He was sufficiently well endowed by nature with small gifts: he sang well, played the guitar, spoke fluently, and wrote with ease, particularly government documents, in which he had acquired a facility while being an adjutant of a battalion; but most noticeable was his trait of egoistical energy, which, though chiefly based on his petty endowments, was in itself a well-defined and striking feature. He was possessed of the egoism, which is so large a part of life itself (and which is most frequently evolved in exclusively masculine, and especially in military, circles), that he could not comprehend any other choice but to lead or to be annihilated, and that his egoism was even the prime mover of all his inward convictions; he naturally wanted to surpass all people with whom he compared himself.

"Of course, I am not going to pay any attention to what Moscow[1] is prattling!" muttered the lieutenant, conscious

[1] So the common soldiers are called collectively.

of a burden of apathy on his heart, and of a mistiness of thoughts, which were caused by the aspect of the convoy of the wounded and by the soldier's words, the meaning of which was involuntarily increased and confirmed by the sounds of the bombardment. "Funny Moscow! Go, Nikoláev! Move on — Have you fallen asleep?" he added, in a somewhat angry voice, adjusting the folds of his overcoat.

The reins began to be pulled, Nikoláev smacked his lips, and the vehicle started at a gallop.

"We will stop for only a minute to feed them, and we will move on to-day," said the officer.

II.

JUST as he was driving into a street of Duvánka, with its demolished stone walls of Tartar houses, Lieutenant Kozeltsóv was stopped by a convoy of bombs and cannon-balls, on its way to Sevastopol, and crowded together on the road.

Two infantrymen were sitting in the dust on the stones of a ruined fence, near the road, and eating a watermelon with bread.

"Are you going far, countryman?" said one of them, munching his bread, to a soldier with a small bag over his shoulders, who had stopped near them.

"I am on my way to the company from the provincial capital," answered the soldier, looking away from the melon, and adjusting his bag on his back. "We have been for nearly three weeks looking after the company's hay, but now they have called everybody back; and it is not known in what place the regiment is at present. They say that our men last week relieved those on the Shipwharf. Have you not heard, gentlemen?"

"In the city, brother, in the city it is stationed," said the other old soldier of the baggage-train, who was digging with his clasp knife into the unripe, white melon. "We have just left there at noon. It is awful there, brother!"

"How so, gentlemen?"

"Don't you hear them? They are firing all around, so that there is not a place safe. It is impossible to tell how many of our brothers they have killed!"

And the speaker waved his hand and straightened his cap.

The pedestrian soldier thoughtfully shook his head, smacked his tongue, then took out of his boot-leg a pipe, without filling it, poked the half-burned tobacco, lighted a piece of punk with the pipe of the soldier who was smoking, and raised his cap.

"Only God can help us, gentlemen! Good-bye!" he said, and, adjusting the sack on his back, walked up the road.

"Ho there, wait a little!" persuasively said the one who was digging into the watermelon.

"It's all the same!" mumbled the pedestrian, winding his way between the wheels of the crowding vehicles.

III.

The station was filled with people when Kozeltsóv drove up to it. The first person whom he met on the porch was a very young, haggard man, the inspector, who kept exchanging words with two officers following at his heels.

"You will wait not only three days, but even ten days! Generals have to wait, too, sir!" said the inspector, with the desire to sting the travellers. "You don't expect me to harness myself for you!"

"Then don't give anybody any horses, if there are none! Why were they given to a lackey with his things?" cried the older of the two officers, with a glass of tea in his hands, and apparently avoiding the use of the personal pronoun, but letting him feel that he could have used "thou" to the inspector if he had wanted.

"Now you judge for yourself, Mr. Inspector," said the other, the younger officer, hesitatingly, "we are not travelling for our personal pleasure. No doubt we are wanted, if we have been ordered out. If you won't let us have them, I will write to the general. But what is this? — You, it seems, do not respect the officers' calling."

"You always spoil things!" the older officer interrupted him. "You are only in my way; one must know how to talk with him. Now he has lost his respect for us. Give us horses this minute!" I say.

"Most gladly, sir, but where shall I get them?"

The inspector kept a moment's silence, and suddenly grew excited, and, waving his hands, began to speak:

"I understand it all and know it all, sir. But what are you going to do? Give me only" (the faces of the officers were lit up by hope) — "give me only a chance to live to the end of the month, and I will no longer be here. I prefer to go to Mound Malákhov, than to stay here, upon my word! Let them do what they please. In the whole station there is not one safe vehicle, and the horses have not had a bunch of hay for three days."

And the inspector disappeared through the gate.

Kozeltsóv entered the room at the same time with the officers.

"Well," the older officer quietly said to the younger, though but a second before he had seemed to be excited, "we have been travelling for three months, so we will wait a little longer. No great misfortune, — we shall get there early enough."

The smoky, dirty room was so crowded with officers and portmanteaus, that Kozeltsóv barely found a place on the window to sit down. Looking at the officers' countenances, and listening to their conversations, he began to roll a cigarette. On the right of the door, near a crooked, greasy table, on which stood two samovárs with the brass turned green in spots, and where pieces of sugar lay on bits of paper, sat the chief group: a young officer, without moustache, in a new quilted summer coat, was filling the teapot; four officers of about the same age were scattered in the different corners of the room. One of these slept on the divan, having rolled up his fur coat under his head; another, who stood at the table, was carving some roast mutton for a one-armed officer seated there. Two officers, one of them in an adjutant's overcoat, the other in an infantry overcoat, but one of fine material, and with his cartridge-box slung over his shoulder, sat near the oven bench; from the manner in which both looked at the others, and in which the one with the cartridge-box smoked his cigar, it was evident that they were not infan-

try officers at the front, and that they were satisfied with this. It cannot be said that their manner showed contempt, but a certain self-satisfied composure, based partly on their wealth and partly on their relations with generals, — a consciousness of superiority, rising to a desire to conceal it.

A youthful, thick-lipped doctor and an artillery officer with a German physiognomy were sitting almost on the legs of the young officer who was asleep on the divan, and were counting some money. Some four orderlies were either dozing, or attending to portmanteaus and bundles at the door. Among all these persons, Kozeltsóv did not find a single acquaintance; but he began attentively to listen to their conversations. He took at once a liking for the young officers, who, as he immediately decided from their looks, were coming directly from the corps, and, moreover, they reminded him that his brother, also fresh from the corps, was to arrive in a few days at one of the batteries of Sevastopol. But in the officer with the cartridge-box, whose face he had seen somewhere, everything seemed to him disgusting and impudent. He even left the window with the thought, "I will settle him, if he tries to say anything," and sat down on the oven bench. Being simply a good officer at the front, he could not, as a general rule, bear any officers of the staff, such as he judged at first glance those two to be.

IV.

"But this is dreadfully annoying," said one of the young officers, "to be so near, and yet not to be able to reach it. There may be an engagement to-day, and we shall not be there."

In the piping tone of the voice, and in the fresh, spotted blush which covered the face of the officer while he was speaking, one could see the refreshing, youthful bashfulness of a man who is all the time afraid that his words are not properly chosen.

The armless officer looked at him with a smile.

"You will get there in plenty time, believe me," he said.

The young officer looked respectfully at the haggard face of the armless man, which was unexpectedly brightened by a smile, and he grew silent and busied himself with the tea. Indeed, in the face of the one-armed officer, in his attitude, and especially in the empty sleeve of his overcoat, was expressed much of that calm equanimity which could be explained by the assumption that in every affair and conversation he looked as though saying, "All this is very beautiful, all this I know, and all this I could do myself if I wanted to."

"What, then, is our decision?" again said the young officer to his companion in the quilted coat, "shall we remain here overnight or shall we continue travelling with our horse?"

His companion refused to continue the journey.

"Just think of it, captain," continued the one who was

pouring out the tea, turning to the armless officer, and lifting up the knife which he had dropped, "they told us that horses were dreadfully expensive at Sevastopol, and so we bought a horse in partnership at Simferopol."

"I suppose they have fleeced you for it?"

"Really, I do not know, captain. We paid for the horse and vehicle ninety roubles. Is that very dear?" he added, turning to everybody in general and in particular to Kozeltsóv, who was watching him.

"No, not dear, if it is a young horse," said Kozeltsóv.

"You see! And they told us that it was too dear — He is a little lame now, but that will pass. We were told that he was a strong horse."

"You are from what corps?" asked Kozeltsóv, wishing to find out something about his brother.

"We are from the yeomen's regiment, — there are six of us, and we are all bound for Sevastopol, at our own request," said the talkative young officer. "The trouble is, we do not know where our batteries are; some say, at Sevastopol, and others again say, at Odessa."

"Could you not have found out at Simferopol?" asked Kozeltsóv.

"They did not know — Let me tell you, our comrade went there to the chancery; they told him a lot of rude things — you can imagine how disagreeable that is — Would you wish a cigarette all rolled up?" he said to the armless officer, who was on the point of getting out his cigarette-holder.

He was attentive to him with a certain servile enthusiasm.

"Are you yourself from Sevastopol?" he continued. "O Lord, how wonderful all this is! In St. Petersburg we have been thinking of you, of all the heroes!" he said, turning to Kozeltsóv with respect and kindliness.

"Well, so you may have to journey back again?" asked the ensign.

"That is what we are afraid of. You may imagine: we have bought a horse, and have provided ourselves with all necessaries, — a coffee-pot with a spirit-lamp, and other necessary trifles, — and now we have no money left," he said in a quiet voice, looking back at his companion, "so that, if we have to journey back, we do not know what to do."

"Did you not get any travelling money?" asked Kozeltsóv.

"No," he answered in a whisper, "but we were promised that we should get it here."

"Have you any certificate to that effect?"

"I know that the certificate is the main thing, but there is a senator in Moscow, he is an uncle of mine, — and when I called at his house, he assured me that they would give it to me here, or else I should have taken some from him. Will they give it?"

"Certainly."

"I myself think they will," he said, in a tone which proved that, having asked the same thing at thirty stations, and having received all kinds of answers, he no longer had any full confidence in anybody's statement.

V.

"WHO has asked for beet-soup?" demanded the slovenly landlady, a woman about forty years of age, entering the room with a soup-bowl.

The conversation stopped at once, and all the persons in the room gazed at the landlady. One officer even winked to another.

"Oh, Kozeltsóv asked for it," said the young officer. "We must wake him. Get up and eat!" he said, going up to the one who was sleeping on the divan, and pushing him by the shoulder.

A boy, seventeen years of age, with vivacious black eyes and a blush covering his whole cheek, sprang up energetically from the divan, and, rubbing his eyes, stopped in the middle of the room.

"Oh, pardon me," he said to the doctor, whom he had pushed in rising.

Lieutenant Kozeltsóv at once recognized his brother, and went up to him.

"Do you not know me?" he said, smiling.

"Ah, ah, ah!" cried the younger brother, beginning to kiss his brother, "now that is remarkable!"

They kissed three times, but hesitated on the third time, as though both were struck by the idea, "Why exactly three times?"

"Oh, how glad I am!" said the elder, gazing at his brother. "Let us go out on the porch and talk!"

"Come, come! I do not want any soup — You eat it, Féderson!" he said to his companion.

"But you wanted to eat."

"I do not want anything."

When they had gone out on the porch, the younger brother kept asking, "Well, tell me how you are," and kept on saying how glad he was to see him, but did not tell anything about himself.

"I want to get back to Sevastopol as soon as possible: if one has luck, one can advance here faster than in the guards. There it takes ten years to become a colonel, and here Tótleben was promoted in two years from lieutenant-colonel to general. And if I am killed, well, what's to be done?"

"That's the kind of fellow you are!" said his brother, smiling.

"Really, do you know, brother?" said the younger, smiling and blushing, as though getting ready to say something disgraceful. "All this is nothing. The chief reason why I asked to be sent down here is, I was ashamed to stay in St. Petersburg, while here men are dying for their country. And, then, I wanted to be with you," he added, more bashfully still.

"How funny you are!" said the elder brother, drawing out his cigarette-holder, and without looking at him. "What a pity, we shall not be together."

"Now, tell me truthfully, is it terrible in the bastions?" suddenly asked the younger.

"At first it is terrible, then you get used to it, and it is all right. You will see for yourself."

"Now tell me this: will they take Sevastopol? I think they never will."

"God knows."

"Here is an annoyance — Just think of my bad luck! On the road they stole a whole bundle, and my hat was in it, so that I am now in a terrible fix, and do not know how to make my appearance."

Kozeltsóv the second, Vladímir, very much resembled

his brother Mikháylo, just as a blooming rose-bush resembles a defloured brier. His hair, too, was blond, but thick and curling over the temples. On his white, tender nape there was a small blond lock — a sign of good fortune, as the nurses say. On the tender white skin of his cheeks did not dwell, but burst forth, a full-blooded, youthful blush, betraying all the movements of his soul. His eyes, although like his brother's, were opener and brighter, which was the more apparent because they were covered by a light film of moisture. A blond down was sprouting on his cheeks and over his red lips that folded themselves into a bashful smile, or displayed his white, shining teeth. Stately, broad-shouldered, in his unbuttoned overcoat, underneath which could be seen a red shirt with a slanting collar, with a cigarette in his hand, leaning against the balustrade of the porch, with a naïve joy expressed in his face and gestures, he was such a charming boy, as he stood before his brother, that he could stand there and look at him for a long time.

He was very happy to see his brother, and looked at him with respect and pride, thinking of him as a hero; but in some respects, namely, in worldly knowledge, in the ability of speaking French, and of being in the society of distinguished people, of dancing, and so forth, he was a little ashamed of him, looked down upon him, and even hoped to be able to educate him. All his impressions were fresh from St. Petersburg, from the house of a lady who was fond of good-looking fellows, and who had had him at her house during the holidays, and from the house of the Moscow senator, where he had once danced at a great ball.

VI.

Having talked their fill, and having finally reached a feeling, frequently experienced, that there was little in common between them, even though they loved each other, the brothers remained silent for quite awhile.

"Take your things, and we will start at once," said the elder brother.

The younger suddenly blushed, and was ill at ease.

"Straight to Sevastopol?" he asked, after a moment's silence.

"Why, yes. You have not many things; I suppose we can manage them."

"Very well! We will start at once," said the younger, with a sigh, and entered the room.

But, before opening the door, he stopped in the vestibule, gloomily hung his head, and began to think:

"At once straight to Sevastopol, under the bombs — terrible! However, it is all the same; sooner or later it would have to be. Now, at least, it will be with brother — "

The trouble was that only now, at the thought that, after seating himself in the vehicle, he would not get out of it until he found himself in Sevastopol, and that no accident whatsoever could detain him, did he form for the first time a clear conception of the danger which he was seeking, and he was disturbed in mind at the mere thought of its nearness. Having calmed himself a little, he entered the room; but fifteen minutes passed, and he had not yet come out to his brother, so that the latter

finally opened the door, in order to call him. The younger Kozeltsóv, in the attitude of a guilty schoolboy, was speaking about something to Officer P——. When the brother opened the door, he looked completely lost.

"Directly, directly!" he said, waving his hand to his brother. "Wait there a moment, if you please."

A minute later he came out, and went up to his brother with a deep sigh.

"Just think of it, I cannot journey with you, brother," he said.

"How is that? What nonsense!"

"I will tell you the whole truth, Mísha! We are all out of money, and we all owe some to that staff-captain whom you have seen in there. It is a perfect shame!"

The elder brother frowned, and for a long time did not break the silence.

"Do you owe much?" he asked, looking at his brother with a scowl.

"Not much, not very much; but it makes me feel ashamed. He has paid for me at three stations, and it was all the time his sugar we have been using — so that I do not know — and we have been playing at preference — I am indebted to him a little."

"That is bad, Volódya! What would you have done, if you had not met me?" the elder brother said, sternly, without looking at him.

"Well, I thought I should get the travelling money at Sevastopol, and so I should pay him there. I certainly can fix it that way; and so it will be better if I journey with him to-morrow."

The elder brother drew out his purse, and with a certain quivering in his fingers, took out from it two ten-rouble and one three-rouble bills.

"Here is all my money," he said. "How much do you owe?"

When Kozeltsóv said that this was all his money, he

was not telling the whole truth; he had besides four gold coins sewn into the lining of the coat against an evil day, but he had vowed that he would never touch them.

It turned out that Kozeltsóv owed in all, for the preference and for the sugar, eight roubles. The elder brother gave him the money, remarking at the same time that it would not do to act that way, and especially to play at preference.

"What did you play for?"

The younger brother did not answer a word. His brother's question appeared to him as a doubt of his honesty. His annoyance with himself, his shame of his action, which had given rise to such suspicions, and the insult from his brother, whom he loved so, produced on his impressionable nature such a strong and morbid sensation, that he did not make any reply. Feeling that he would not be able to keep back the tearful sounds which were rising in his throat, he took the money, without looking at it, and went in to his companions.

VII.

Nikoláev, who in Duvánka fortified himself with two swallows of brandy, purchased from a soldier selling it on the bridge, jerked the reins; the vehicle jolted over the rocky and occasionally shaded road which led along the Belbek to Sevastopol, and the brothers, whose legs were continually striking against each other, kept a stubborn silence, though they were all the time thinking one of the other.

"Why did he offend me?" thought the younger. "He might have passed it over in silence. He acted as though he took me for a thief, and he seems to be angry even now, so that our relations will for ever be strained. And how glorious it could otherwise be for both of us at Sevastopol! Two brothers, friendly to each other, are both fighting against the enemy: the elder brother, though not a very well educated man, is already a brave soldier, and the younger — well, he is a valiant fellow himself — In a week I should prove to everybody's satisfaction that I am no longer so very young! I will quit blushing; in my face will be expressed bravery; and by that time my moustache, though not very long, will be of considerable size," and he pulled the down which had appeared at the edges of his mouth.

"Maybe we shall arrive to-day to take part at once in an engagement, both my brother and I. He must be stubborn and brave, one of those who do not talk much, but act better than others. I should like to know," he continued, "whether he is jamming me into the edge of

the vehicle on purpose, or not. He, no doubt, feels that I am ill at ease, and looks as though he did not notice me. We shall arrive to-day," he continued his reflections, keeping to the edge of the vehicle, and fearing to move, lest his brother should notice that he was ill at ease, "and we shall make at once for the bastion; I at the guns, and my brother with his company, and we shall march together. Suddenly the French will rush upon us. I — to shoot, and shoot. I will kill a lot of them; but they continue to press forward. There is no chance of firing, and, of course, there is no salvation for me; but suddenly brother will dash ahead, with sabre in hand, and I will seize a gun, and the soldiers will run with us. The French will rush up to brother. I will run up, will kill one Frenchman and another, and will save brother. I shall be wounded in one arm, so will seize the gun with the other, and will still run forward, Only brother will be killed by a bullet at my side; I will stop for an instant, will look sadly at him, will rise to my feet, and will shout: 'After me! Let us avenge his death! I have loved my brother more than anybody in this world,' I will say, 'and I have lost him. Revenge! Let us annihilate the foe, or die all together!'

"All will shout, and will plunge forward after me. The whole French army will come out, and Pelissier himself. We will destroy them all; but I am wounded a second, and a third time, and I shall fall down to my death. Then everybody will run up to me. Gorchakóv will come, and will ask me what I wish. I will say that I have no other wish than to be placed by my brother's side, and that I want to die with him. I shall be carried and put down near the blood-stained body of my brother. I will lift myself a little, and say: 'Yes, you were unable properly to estimate the two men who have sincerely loved their country; now they have both fallen — may God forgive you!' and I shall expire."

Who knows to what extent these dreams might be realized!

"Have you ever been in a hand-to-hand encounter?" he suddenly asked his brother, forgetful of the fact that he had intended not to speak to him.

"No, not once," answered the elder brother. "In our regiment two thousand men were put out of action while at work, and I, too, was wounded while at work. War does not take place at all as you imagine it, Volódya!"

The word "Volódya" touched the younger brother: he wanted to have an explanation from his brother, who did not have the slightest idea that he had offended Volódya.

"You are not angry at me, Mísha?" he asked, after a moment's silence.

"For what?"

"No, nothing — that there has been — oh, nothing."

"Not in the least," answered the elder brother, turning to him, and slapping his leg.

"Then you must forgive me, Mísha, if I have given you cause for grief."

And the younger brother turned away, in order to conceal the tears that suddenly had appeared in his eyes.

VIII.

"Is it possible this is Sevastopol already?" asked the younger brother, as the vehicle reached the top of a hill.

Before them lay the bay with the masts of ships, the sea with the hostile fleet in the distance, the white shore batteries, the barracks, the water-works, the docks, the city buildings, and the pale violet clouds of smoke, which were continually rising along the yellow hills that surrounded the city, and that stood out against the blue sky, in the rosy beams of the sun, which now was brilliantly reflected and setting at the horizon of the dark sea.

Volódya beheld without shuddering the terrible place of which he had been thinking so much. On the contrary, with æsthetic enjoyment and with a heroic sensation of self-satisfaction, that in half an hour he himself would be there, he gazed at this truly enchanting and original spectacle, and he continued gazing at it up to the very time when they arrived at the Northern side, at the baggage-train of his brother's regiment, where they were to get definite information as to the location of the regiment and battery.

The officer in charge of the baggage-train was living near the so-called new town, — a collection of frame barracks, built by sailor families, — in a tent which was connected with a fairly large booth, constructed of green oak boughs that had not yet become sufficiently dry.

The brothers found the officer at a dirty table, on which stood a glass of cold tea, a salver with brandy and crumbs of dry caviar and bread, clad in a soiled yellow shirt,

counting up on a large abacus an immense heap of paper money. But before saying anything about the personality of the officer and his conversation, we must take a closer look at the interior of his booth, and get a little acquainted with his manner of life and occupations.

The new booth was large, firmly plaited, and comfortably constructed; it was provided with little tables and sod benches, and was altogether such as are built only for generals or regimental commanders. The sides and the ceiling were protected from the falling leaves by three rugs which, though of atrocious designs, were new and, no doubt, expensive. On an iron bed underneath the main rug, with the representation of a horsewoman upon it, lay a bright red plush coverlet, a soiled torn pillow, and a raccoon fur coat; on the table stood a looking-glass in a silver frame, a terribly dirty silver hairbrush, a broken horn comb full of greasy hair, a silver candlestick, a bottle of liqueur with an immense label in red and gold, a gilded clock with the portrait of Peter the Great, two gold pens, a box with some kind of capsules, a bread crust, and old cards lying in a heap, while under the bed stood empty and full bottles.

This officer was in charge of the regiment's baggage and of the provender for the horses. With him lived his great friend, a commissionaire, who was interested in some speculations. As the brothers entered, he was asleep in the tent, while the officer of the baggage-train was counting up the Crown money before the end of the month. The exterior of this officer was handsome and martial: he was tall, wore a long moustache, and was of noble proportions. His disagreeable points were a certain sweaty and bloated condition of his face, which almost concealed his small gray eyes (as though he were saturated with porter), and an extraordinary neglect of his person, from his greasy hair down to his large bare feet in ermine-fur slippers.

"What a lot of money! What a lot of it!" said Kozeltsóv the elder, upon entering the booth, and with involuntary greed directing his eyes upon the heap of bills. "If you lent me only one-half of it, Vasíli Mikháylovich!"

The officer stooped a little, as he noticed the newcomers, and, collecting his money, bowed, without rising.

"Ah, if it all were mine! But it is Crown money, my friend — Who is this with you?" he said, putting the money in a small safe which was standing near him, and eyeing Volódya.

"That is my brother, who has come from the corps. We have called here to find out where the regiment is stationed."

"Sit down, gentlemen!" he said, rising, and walking into the tent, without paying any further attention to the guests. "Won't you have a drink, say a little porter?" he said.

"It won't hurt, Vasíli Mikháylovich!"

Volódya was impressed by the magnificence of the officer of the baggage-train, by his nonchalant manner, and by the respect with which his brother spoke to him.

"He must be a very good officer, whom all respect: no doubt he is simple, but hospitable and brave," he thought, modestly and timidly sitting down on the divan.

"Where, then, is our regiment stationed?" the elder brother asked across the tent.

"What?"

He repeated his question.

"Zéyfer was here to-day: he told me they had gone to the fifth bastion."

"Sure?"

"If I tell you so, it must be correct; however, the devil take him! It would not be much for him to tell a lie. Well, will you have some porter?" said the officer, still staying in his tent.

"Very well, I will take a drink," said Kozeltsóv.

"And will you have a glass, Ósip Ignátevich?" continued the voice in the tent, evidently addressing the sleeping commissionaire. "Get up: it is now nearly five o'clock."

"Don't bother me! I am not sleeping," replied a thin, lazy voice.

"Well, get up anyway: it is dull without you!"

The officer of the baggage-train came back to his guests.

"Let us have some Simferopol porter!" he shouted.

An orderly, with a proud expression on his face, so Volódya thought, entered the booth, and, pushing Volódya aside, fetched a bottle of porter from underneath the bench.

The bottle was soon emptied, and the conversation was for some time continued in the same strain, when the folds of the tent were pushed aside, and from it emerged a short, well-preserved man, in a blue dressing-gown with tassels, in a cap with a red border and a cockade. Upon his appearance he was smoothing down his moustache; gazing at some point in the rug, he returned the salute of the officers with a barely perceptible shrug of his shoulders.

"I will take a glass myself!" he said, sitting down at the table. "Are you coming from St. Petersburg, young man?" he said, graciously addressing Volódya.

"Yes, sir, I am on my way to Sevastopol."

"Did you volunteer?"

"Yes, sir."

"What is it that makes you so anxious, gentlemen? Really, I do not understand it!" continued the commissionaire. "It seems to me I would be willing to walk back to St. Petersburg, if they would only let me. I am tired of this accursed life, upon my word!"

"What are you lacking here?" said the elder Kozeltsóv, addressing him. "You, certainly, are having an easy time here!"

The commissionaire glanced at him, and turned away.

"This danger, these privations, — can't get anything," he continued, turning to Volódya. "What makes you so anxious? Gentlemen, I am positively unable to understand you! If there were any advantage from it, but thus! Well, what good is there in your being made a cripple for life at your age?"

"Some need a monetary advantage, and others serve for honour's sake," Kozeltsóv the elder again put in his word.

"Can honour be sweet when there's nothing to eat?" said the commissionaire, smiling contemptously, and turning to the officer of the baggage-train, who also smiled at his witticism. "Set it for 'Lucia,' and we will listen," he said, pointing to a music-box. "I like it."

"Is that Vasíli Mikháylovich a good man?" Volódya asked his brother, after leaving the booth at dusk, and proceeding on their way to Sevastopol.

"Passable, only dreadfully stingy! But I cannot bear that commissionaire. I'll knock him down some day."

IX.

Volódya was not exactly in an unhappy frame of mind when they reached, almost at night, the large bridge across the harbour, but he experienced a heavy sensation in his heart. Everything he had heard and seen was so incompatible with his past, though still recent, impressions: the large, bright, parqueted examination hall, the good, merry voices, and the laughter of his comrades, the new uniform, the beloved Tsar, whom he had been seeing for the last seven years, and who, bidding them farewell, had, with tears in his eyes, called them his children, — and everything he now saw so little resembled his fair, rainbow-coloured, magnanimous dreams!

"So here we are!" said the elder brother, upon reaching the Michael battery, and climbing out of the vehicle. "If they will let us through the bridge, we will go at once to the Nicholas barracks. You will stay there until morning, and I will go at once to the regiment, and find out where your battery is stationed, and in the morning I will come for you."

"What for? Let us go together," said Volódya. "I will go with you to the bastion. I shall have to get used to it sooner or later. If you are going there, I can, too."

"You had better not go."

"I beg you; I shall, at least, find out how —"

"My advice is not to go. Still —"

The sky was clear and dark; the stars and the fires of the bombs and from the discharges, continuously in mo-

tion, were already gleaming brightly in the darkness. The large white structure of the battery and the beginning of the bridge rose from the darkness. The discharges of several guns and the explosions, rapidly following each other or resounding all together literally every second, shook the air ever louder and more distinctly. Through this roar could be heard the gloomy rumbling of the sea, as though seconding it. The brothers went up to the bridge. A reserve soldier struck his gun against his hand in an awkward manner, and shouted:

"Who goes there?"

"A soldier."

"I have orders not to let any one through."

"But we must be there."

"Ask the officer."

The officer, who was dozing, while sitting on an anchor, rose, and gave the order to let them through.

"You may go there, but not back. Back there! I declare, all at once!" he shouted to the regimental vehicles, laden to the top with gabions, that were crowding at the entrance.

Upon descending to the first pontoon, the brothers fell in with some soldiers who were returning from there, and speaking loudly.

"He has received his supply of ammunition, and so he is squaring up accounts, — that's what I tell you."

"My friends!" said another voice, "as soon as you crawl out on the Northern side, you will see the world again, upon my word! The air is different there."

"Nonsense!" said the first. "The other day an accursed bomb flew as far as this and took off the legs of two sailors, that's what —"

The brothers passed the first pontoon, and, waiting for the vehicle, halted at the second, which in places was already swamped. The wind, which had seemed feeble on land, was very strong here, and came in gusts; the

bridge swayed to and fro, and the waves, noisily washing against the beams and breaking against the moorings and cables, flooded the planks. On the right the sea roared and darkled in a hostile mist, separated by an endless, even, black line from the starry heaven, gleaming pale gray at the horizon; somewhere in the distance glimmered the fires on the hostile fleet; on the left rose the black mass of one of our ships, and could be heard the plashing of the waves against its hull; one could see a steamer noisily and rapidly moving from the Northern side. The fire of a bomb exploding in its neighbourhood for an instant illuminated the gabions heaped high on its deck, two men standing on the bridge, and the white foam and sprays of the greenish waves through which the steamer was ploughing.

At the edge of the bridge a man was sitting in nothing but a shirt, his feet dangling in the water, and was fixing something in the pontoon. In front, over Sevastopol, were borne the same fires, and louder and louder were the sounds that reached them. A surging wave from the sea washed over the right side of the bridge and wet Volódya's feet; two soldiers, splashing their feet in the water, passed by him. Suddenly something crashed and lighted up the bridge in front, a vehicle that was going over it, and a man on horseback, and the splinters fell into the water, whistling and raising spray.

"Ah, Mikháylo Seménych!" said the rider, halting his horse in front of the elder Kozeltsóv. "Well, have you entirely recuperated?"

"As you see. Whither does God carry you?"

"To the Northern side, for cartridges. I am to-day acting regimental adjutant — we are expecting an assault from hour to hour."

"Where is Martsóv?"

"He lost a leg yesterday — he was in town, sleeping in his room — Do you know him?"

"The regiment is in the fifth bastion, is it not?"

"Yes, they have taken the place of the M—— regiment. Go to the ambulance; you will find some of our men there, and they will take you to it."

"Well, and my quarters on the Morskáya are still in good condition?"

"Not at all, my dear! It has long ago been demolished by bombs. You will not recognize Sevastopol now: not a woman, no inns, no music there now; yesterday the last establishment left. It is very sad now — Good-bye!"

And the officer galloped away.

Volódya suddenly felt terribly: he thought that a cannon-ball or a splinter would at any moment strike his head. This moist darkness, all these sounds, especially the growling splash of the waves, — everything seemed to tell him that he should not advance, that nothing good awaited him now, that his foot would never again step on land on the other side of the bay, that he had better turn back and run somewhere, as far away from the place as possible. "But maybe it is already too late; maybe it is my fate," he thought, shuddering partly at this thought, and partly because the water had soaked through his boots, and was wetting his feet.

Volódya drew a deep sigh, and walked a little away, at one side of his brother.

"O Lord! Is it possible I shall be killed? I, Volódya Kozeltsóv? O Lord, have mercy upon me!" he said, in a whisper, making the sign of the cross.

"Come now, Volódya!" said the elder brother, as the vehicle got up on the bridge. "Have you seen the bomb?"

On the bridge the brothers encountered wagons with wounded men, with gabions, and one with furniture which a woman was taking away. On the other side nobody barred their way.

Instinctively, groping along the wall of the Nicholas battery, the brothers listened in silence to the sounds of the bombs which were bursting overhead and to the roar of the splinters that were falling from above, and arrived at that place in the battery where the image was. Here they learned that the fifth light battery, to which Volódya had been assigned, was stationed at the Shipwharf; they decided, in spite of the danger, to go for the night to the elder brother's station in the fifth bastion, and thence, on the following morning, to the battery. Turning into the corridor, and stepping over the legs of the sleeping soldiers, who were lying along the whole wall of the battery, they finally reached the ambulance.

X.

Upon entering the first room, filled with cots, upon which lay the wounded, and saturated with an oppressive, disgustingly terrible hospital odour, they met two Sisters of Mercy, who were walking toward them.

One woman, about fifty years of age, with black eyes and a severe expression on her face, was carrying bandages and lint, and giving orders to a boyish surgeon's assistant, who was following her; the other, a very pretty girl, about twenty years of age, with a pale, gentle, fair-complexioned face, which looked sweet and helpless from underneath her white cap, and with her hands in the pockets of her apron, was walking by the side of the elder woman, apparently afraid to leave her.

Kozeltsóv addressed to them the question as to where Martsóv was, who had lost a leg the day before.

"I think, of the P—— regiment?" asked the older woman. "Is he a relative of yours?"

"No, a comrade."

"Take them there," she said to the young Sister, in French. "Over there," and she herself walked over to a wounded man with the assistant.

"Come now — what are you gazing at?" said Kozeltsóv to Volódya, who had raised his eyebrows and was staring at the wounded with an expression of compassion, without being able to tear himself away from them. "Come on!"

Volódya followed his brother, but he continued to look around and unconsciously to repeat:

"O Lord! O Lord!"

"He has evidently not been here long!" said the Sister to Kozeltsóv, pointing to Volódya, who, sighing and repeating his exclamation, followed them through the corridor.

"He has just arrived."

The pretty sister glanced at Volódya and suddenly burst out weeping. "My God! My God! When will all this end?" she said, with an expression of despair in her voice. They entered the officer's room. Martsóv lay on his back, holding his muscular arms, bared up to the elbow, behind his head, with an expression on his sallow face which showed that he had set his teeth, in order not to cry from pain. His sound leg, in a stocking, stuck out from underneath his coverlet, and one could see how he was convulsively moving his toes.

"Well, how are you?" asked the Sister, with her thin, gentle fingers, upon one of which Volódya noticed a gold ring, raising his somewhat bald head and fixing the pillow. "Your comrades have come to see you."

"Of course, it is painful," he said, angrily. "Let me alone! It is all right." The toes in the stocking began to twitch faster. "How are you? What is your name? Pardon me," he said, turning to Kozeltsóv. "Oh, yes! I beg your pardon! One does forget here everything. We did live together," he added, without the least expression of pleasure, looking questioningly at Volódya.

"This is my brother, he has just arrived from St. Petersburg."

"Hm! And I have received my full discharge," he said, with a scowl. "Oh, how it pains! I wish I were dead!"

He raised his legs, and, continuing to twitch his toes with increased rapidity, covered his face with his hands.

"He must be left alone," the Sister said, in a whisper, with tears in her eyes. "He is in a bad condition."

The brothers had decided while still on the Northern side to go to the fifth bastion. But, as they emerged from the Nicholas battery, they seemed to have agreed not to subject themselves to unnecessary danger, and, without saying anything on this point, they decided to go each his own way.

"But how will you find it, Volódya?" said the elder brother. "Nikoláev will take you to the Shipwharf, and I will go by myself, and will be with you to-morrow."

Nothing else was said in this last farewell between the two brothers.

XI.

The booming of the cannon was continued with the same force, but the Ekaterínenskaya Street, through which Volódya was walking, with taciturn Nikoláev at his heels, was deserted and quiet. In the dusk he could see only the broad street, with the white walls of large houses mostly in ruins, and the stone sidewalks, over which he was marching: occasionally he met some soldiers and officers. Passing on the left side by the Admiralty, he could discern, in the glaring fire which was burning beyond the wall, the acacias planted along the sidewalk, with their green supports, and the wretched, dust-covered leaves of these trees. He distinctly heard his steps and those of Nikoláev, who was walking behind him, breathing heavily. He thought of nothing in particular: the pretty Sister of Mercy, Martsóv's foot with its toes twitching in the stocking, the bombs, and various pictures of death dimly passed through his imagination. All his youthful, impressionable soul was compressed and pining under the consciousness of his loneliness and of the universal indifference to his fate in danger.

"I shall be killed, shall suffer and writhe, and nobody will weep for me!" And all this in place of the life of a hero, full of energy and sympathy, of which he had had such glorious dreams. The bombs exploded and whistled nearer and nearer; Nikoláev sighed more frequently, without breaking the silence. As he crossed the bridge, which led to the Shipwharf, he saw something strike the water not far from him, with a whistling sound; for a second

it cast a blood-red glamour on the violet waves, then it disappeared, and again rose from it with the spray.

"I declare, she is not dead yet!" said Nikoláev, hoarsely.

"Yes," he answered, involuntarily and unexpectedly to himself, in a thin, piping voice.

They encountered stretchers with wounded soldiers, and again regimental carts with gabions; at the Ship-wharf they fell in with a regiment; horsemen passed by them. One of them was an officer, with a Cossack. He was riding at a gallop, but seeing Volódya, he checked his horse near him, looked into his face, turned away, and rode off, striking his horse with the whip.

"Alone, all alone! It makes no difference to anybody whether I exist or not," thought the boy, and he wanted to weep in earnest.

Having ascended a hill, past a high, white wall, he entered a street of demolished little cottages, which were constantly illuminated by bombs. A drunken, slatternly woman, who came out of a gate with a sailor, stumbled upon him.

"Because, if he were a gentleman," she mumbled, "pardon, your Honour, Mr. Officer!"

The poor boy's heart was becoming heavier and heavier; lightnings flashed oftener and oftener against the black horizon, and bombs oftener and oftener whistled and burst about him. Nikoláev sighed and suddenly began to speak, in what appeared to Volódya a voice of restrained terror.

"There we were in a hurry to leave the province. Journeying all the time. A fine place to hurry to!"

"Brother is well now," replied Volódya, hoping by a conversation to dispel the terrible feeling which had taken possession of him.

"Well? You don't call him well, do you? Even those who are completely well had better stay in a hos-

pital at such a time. What pleasure is there to be found here? A man loses a leg or an arm, that is all! Misfortunes are happening here all the time! It is not in the city here as in the bastion, but it is bad as it is. You walk and you say your prayers. I declare that beast is whizzing past me," he added, listening to the sound of a splinter buzzing past him. "Now," added Nikoláev, "I am told to accompany your Honour. Of course, it is our duty to obey orders; but we have left our cart with a soldier, and a bundle is open — Go, accompany him! And if anything is lost of the property, Nikoláev will be responsible."

After taking a few more steps, they emerged in a square. Nikoláev remained silent, and sighed.

"There your artillery is stationed, your Honour!" he suddenly said. "Ask the sentry: he will show you."

Volódya took a few more steps and no longer heard the sound of Nikoláev's sighs.

All at once he felt himself completely, absolutely, alone. This consciousness of loneliness in the danger preceding death, as it seemed to him, weighed as a terribly heavy, cold stone upon his heart. He stopped in the middle of the square, looked around him, to see whether anybody saw him, clasped his head, and in terror thought and said: "O Lord! Am I indeed a coward, a contemptible, despicable, low coward — for my country, for the Tsar, for whom I had but lately joyfully dreamed to die? No, I am an unfortunate, wretched creature!" And Volódya, with a genuine feeling of despair and disenchantment in himself, asked the sentry for the house of the commander of the battery, and went in the direction pointed out to him.

XII.

THE dwelling of the commander of the battery, which the sentry had pointed out to him, was a small house of two stories, with an entrance from the yard. In one of the windows, pasted over with paper, glimmered a feeble candle-light. The orderly sat on the porch and smoked a pipe. He went in to report to the commander of the battery, and led Volódya into a room. In the room, between two windows, beneath a broken mirror, stood a table, covered with official papers, a few chairs, and an iron bed with clean bedclothes, and a small rug near it.

At the very door stood a handsome man with a long moustache, a sergeant, with his short sword and clad in his overcoat, on which hung a cross and a Hungarian medal. In the middle of the room paced an undersized officer of the staff, about forty years of age, his swollen cheek wrapped up, wearing an old, thin overcoat.

"I have the honour of presenting myself, Ensign Kozeltsóv the second, ordered to report at the fifth light battery," Volódya uttered the phrase which he had learned by rote, upon entering the room.

The commander of the battery dryly returned his salute, and, without offering him his hand, invited him to be seated.

Volódya timidly sat down on the chair near the writing-desk, and began to finger a pair of scissors on which he had laid his hands. The commander of the battery, folding his hands behind his back and lowering his head, silently paced the room, with the expression of a man who

is trying to recollect something, and now and then looked at the hands that were twirling the scissors.

The commander of the battery was a fairly stout man, with a large bald spot on the crown of his head, a thick moustache, left to grow at will, and covering his mouth, and pleasing hazel eyes. His hands were beautiful, clean, and plump; his feet were small, with toes well turned out, and they stepped with conviction and with a certain dandyism, which bore evidence that the commander of the battery was not a bashful man.

"Yes," he said, stopping in front of the sergeant, "beginning with to-morrow we must add a measure of grain for each horse of the caisson, for they are looking rather lean. What do you think about it?"

"Well, we can add it, your Honour! Oats are cheaper now," replied the sergeant, moving the fingers of his hands, which he held straight down along the seams, but which he evidently was fond of displaying as an aid to conversation. "Forager Franchúk brought me yesterday a note from the baggage-train, your Honour, that we must buy our axles there, — they say they are cheap. So what is your order?"

"Buy them! He has the money." And the commander of the battery again started to walk up and down the room. "Where are your things?" he suddenly asked Volódya, halting in front of him.

Poor Volódya was so assailed by the idea that he was a coward that in every glance, in every word, he discovered contempt for him, the wretched coward. It seemed to him that the commander of the battery had already made out his secret, and that he was making light of him. He answered confusedly that his things were on the Gráfskaya wharf, and that his brother had promised to bring them on the next day.

But the lieutenant-colonel was not listening to him; turning to the sergeant, he asked:

"Where shall we locate the ensign?"

"The ensign?" asked the sergeant, still more embarrassing Volódya with a cursory glance, expressive of the question, "What kind of an ensign is he?" "Well, below, your Honour, with the staff-captain, we may place the ensign," he continued, after a moment's thought. "The staff-captain is now in the bastion, so his cot is unoccupied."

"Won't you take it, then, for the time being?" said the commander of the battery. "I suppose you are tired. To-morrow we shall fix it better."

Volódya rose and bowed.

"Wouldn't you like some tea?" said the commander of the battery, as he was approaching the door. "You may order the samovár."

Volódya bowed and went out. The colonel's orderly took him down-stairs, and led him into a bare, dirty room, in which all kinds of lumber were lying around and an iron bed was standing without bedding or coverlet. On the bed slept a man in a pink shirt, covered with a thick overcoat.

Volódya took him for a soldier.

"Peter Nikoláevich!" said the orderly, pushing the sleeping man by the shoulder. "The ensign will lie down here — This is our yunker," he added, turning to the ensign.

"Oh, please do not trouble yourself," said Volódya; but the yunker, a tall, solidly built young man, with a handsome, but very stupid face, rose from the bed, threw the overcoat over his shoulders, and, evidently not yet fully awake, went out of the room.

"That's all right, I will sleep in the yard," he muttered.

XIII.

When Volódya was left alone with his thoughts, his first sensation was a dread of the disorderly and disconsolate condition in which his soul was. He wanted to fall asleep and to forget everything that surrounded him, but especially himself. He put out the candle, lay down on the bed, and, taking off his overcoat, covered his head over with it, so as to free himself of the terror of darkness, to which he had been subject from childhood. Suddenly he was struck by the thought that a bomb would reach the house, pierce the roof, and kill him. He listened attentively; above him could be heard the steps of the commander of the battery.

"Still, if it does reach here," he thought, "it will first kill up-stairs, and me only afterward; at least, I shall not be the only one." This thought calmed him a little; he was beginning to doze off. "But what will happen if Sevastopol is taken to-night, and the French make an irruption here? What shall I defend myself with?" He again got up, and began to pace the room. The terror of the real danger suppressed the mysterious terror of the darkness. There was no solid object in the room but a saddle and a samovár.

"I am a scoundrel, a coward, a vile coward!" he suddenly thought, and once more passed over to the oppressive feeling of contempt and even disgust with himself. He lay down again, and endeavoured not to think. Then the impressions of the day involuntarily rose in his

imagination, under the accompaniment of the uninterrupted sounds which made the panes in the one window tremble, and they again reminded him of the danger: now it was the wounded and the blood that stood before him; now bombs and splinters, that were flying into the room; now the pretty Sister of Mercy, who was dressing his mortal wound, and weeping over him; now his mother, who was seeing him off in the provincial town, and fervently praying, with tears in her eyes, before the miracle-working image, — and again his dream seemed impossible to him. But suddenly the thought of Almighty God, who could do everything and receive every prayer, clearly entered into his mind. He knelt down, made the sign of the cross, and folded his hands as he had been taught to pray in childhood. This attitude suddenly transferred him to a long-forgotten blissful feeling.

"If I must die, if it is necessary that I should not be, take me, O Lord," he thought, "take me as soon as possible; but if bravery, if firmness are needed, which I do not possess, give them to me, save me from shame and disgrace, which I am unable to bear, and teach me what to do in order to execute Thy will."

The shy, childish, limited soul suddenly became manly and bright, and saw new, wide, bright horizons. Many, many things he thought and felt in the short time while this feeling lasted. He soon fell into quiet, undisturbed slumber, under the sounds of the protracted roar of the bombardment and the trembling of the windows.

Almighty God! Thou alone hast heard and knowest those simple, but ardent and despairing prayers of ignorance and of dim repentance, and the entreaties to heal their bodies and enlighten their minds, which have risen to Thee from this terrible place of death, issuing from the mouth of a general, who but a second before had been dreaming of the Cross of St. George on his neck, but now with terror was aware of Thy nearness, down to the

common soldier, who fell down on the bare floor of the Nicholas battery and implored Thee to give him there the unconsciously anticipated reward for all his sufferings!

XIV.

The elder Kozeltsóv, having met in the street a soldier of his regiment, repaired with him at once to the fifth bastion.

"Hold on to the wall, your Honour!" said the soldier.

"Why?"

"It is dangerous, your Honour; it is carrying across," said the soldier, listening to the sound of a shell whistling past him and striking against the dry earth on the other side of the street.

Kozeltsóv paid no attention to the soldier, but continued to walk briskly in the middle of the street.

The streets were the same; the fires, sounds, groans, and encounters of wounded men were the same, nay, more frequent. The batteries, breastworks, and trenches were the same as in the spring, when he had been in Sevastopol; but all this was for some reason more melancholy now, and at the same time more energetic. There were more breaches in the houses, no lights whatsoever in the windows, except in Kushchín's house (the hospital), not one woman was met with, and on everything lay not the former character of habit and carelessness, but the imprint of oppressive expectation and weariness.

Finally the last trench was reached, and there he heard the voice of a soldier of the P—— regiment, who had recognized the former commander of his company, and there the third battalion stood in the darkness, crowding at the wall, occasionally illuminated by the fire of the

fusilade, but otherwise audible by their subdued conversation and clanking of guns.

"Where is the commander of the regiment?" asked Kozeltsóv.

"In the blindage, with the naval men, your Honour!" replied the obliging soldier. "If you please, I will take you there."

From one trench into another, the soldier brought Kozeltsóv to a ditch in a trench. Here sat a sailor, smoking a pipe; behind him could be seen a door, through the chink of which peeped a light.

"May I enter?"

"I shall announce you at once," and the sailor went through the door.

Two voices were speaking behind the door.

"If Prussia will continue its neutrality," said one voice, "then Austria, too —"

"What of Austria," said another, "when the Slavic countries — go beg them —"

Kozeltsóv had never been in this blindage. It startled him by its elegance. The floor was of parquetry, and a screen covered the door. Along the walls stood two beds; in the corner stood a large image of the Virgin, in gold foil, and in front of it burnt a rose-coloured lamp. On one of the beds slept a sailor, with all his clothes on; on the other, at a table, on which stood two half-full bottles of wine, sat the persons conversing, — the new commander of the regiment, and an adjutant. Though Kozeltsóv was far from being a coward, and was guilty of absolutely nothing, either before the government or before the commander of the regiment, yet he lost his composure before the colonel, who but lately had been his comrade, — so proudly did this colonel rise and listen to him.

"It is strange," thought Kozeltsóv, looking at his commander; "it is only seven weeks since he has assumed

the command of the regiment, and how already in all his surroundings, in his attire, movements, and looks may be discerned the power of a commander of the regiment. How long ago is it," he thought, "since this very Batrísh-chev used to carouse with us, and to wear for weeks at a time a dark-coloured shirt, and to eat all the time chopped steak and cheese pie without inviting any one to his room? And now! There is an expression of chill haughtiness in his eyes, which says to you: 'Though I am a comrade of yours, being a regimental commander of the new school, yet believe me, I know how gladly you would give up half your life, if you could be in my place!'"

"You have been rather long convalescing," the colonel said coldly to Kozeltsóv, looking at him.

"I was ill, colonel! Even now the wound is not all healed over."

"Then there was no use coming," said the colonel, eyeing the officer's whole form with a suspicious glance. "But can you attend to duty?"

"Certainly I can."

"I am glad of it. Take then from Ensign Záytsev the ninth company, — the one you had before; you will get the order at once."

"Yes, sir."

"Be so kind as to send to me the adjutant of the regiment, when you leave," concluded the commander of the regiment, letting him know by a slight inclination of his head that the interview was at an end.

Coming out of the blindage, Kozeltsóv grumbled something several times and shrugged his shoulders, as though something pained, annoyed, and mortified him; it was not the commander of the regiment who mortified him (there was no reason for that), but he was somehow dissatisfied with himself and with all that surrounded him.

XV.

Before meeting his officers, Kozeltsóv went to greet his company and to find out where it was stationed. The breastwork of gabions, the forms of the trenches, the cannon that he passed, even the splinters and bombs against which he stumbled on his way, — all this continually illuminated by the fires of the discharges, was quite familiar to him; all this had been well impressed upon his memory three months before, during the two weeks he had passed without interruption in this very bastion. Though there was much of a terrifying nature in these reminiscences, yet there was mingled with them a certain charm of the past, and it gave him pleasure to recognize the familiar places and objects, as though he had passed two agreeable weeks here. The company was stationed near the defensive wall on the side of the sixth bastion.

Kozeltsóv entered a long blindage, which was entirely open on the side of the entrance, and in which he was told the ninth company was stationed. There literally was left no space to step foot in the whole blindage: it was so choked with soldiers up to the very entrance. On one side was burning a crooked tallow dip, which a soldier was holding, while lying down, to throw light on a book from which another soldier was reading by syllables. Near the candle in the stifling half-light of the blindage were seen craning heads, eagerly listening to the reader. The book was a primer. Upon entering the blindage, Kozeltsóv heard the following:

"Pray-er aft-er study. I thank Thee, Cre-a-tor —"

"Snuff the candle!" said a voice. "It is a fine book."

"My — God —" continued the reader.

When Kozeltsóv asked for the sergeant, the reader stopped, the soldiers began to stir, to clear their throats, and to sniffle, as is always the case after a repressed conversation; the sergeant, buttoning himself, rose near the group around the reader, and, stepping over and upon the legs of those who could not find a place to draw them back, went out to the officer.

"Good evening, brother! Is this all our company?"

"I wish you health! I congratulate your Honour upon your arrival!" answered the sergeant, looking merrily and in a friendly manner at Kozeltsóv. "How is your health, your Honour? Thank God. It was dull without you."

It was evident that Kozeltsóv was loved by his company.

In the depth of the blindage could be heard voices: "The old captain is back, the one that was wounded, Kozeltsóv, Mikháylo Seménych," and so forth; some even moved toward him, and his drummer saluted him.

"Good evening, Obanchúk!" said Kozeltsóv. "Are you hale? Good evening, boys!" he then said, raising his voice.

"We wish you health!" was roared forth in the blindage.

"How are you getting on, boys?"

"Poorly, your Honour. The French are getting the best of us, that's bad; they are shooting from behind the entrenchment, and that's all! They do not come out into the field."

"Maybe, with God's aid, it will be my luck to see them come out into the field, boys!" said Kozeltsóv. "It will not be our first time; we will stab them again."

"It will give us pleasure to do our best," said several voices.

"He is, really, brave," said a voice.

"He is mightily brave!" said the drummer, not aloud, but audibly enough, turning to another soldier, as though finding his justification in the words of the commander of the company, and convincing him that there was nothing boastful and improbable in these words.

From the soldiers, Kozeltsóv passed over to the defensive barracks, to his fellow officers.

XVI.

In the large room of the barracks there was an immense throng of naval, artillery, and infantry officers. Some were asleep, others conversed, sitting on a caisson and the carriage of a fortress cannon; others again, forming the largest and noisiest group under the vault, were seated on the floor, on two spread felt mantles, drinking porter and playing cards.

"Ah, Kozeltsóv, Kozeltsóv! It is good of you to have come, you are a brave fellow! — How is the wound?" they said on all sides. It was evident that they liked him here, too, and that they were glad to see him back.

Having pressed the hands of his acquaintances, Kozeltsóv joined the noisy group, which was formed by several officers playing cards. Among them also were his acquaintances. A handsome, sparse, dark-complexioned man, with a long thin nose and long moustache standing out from his cheeks, was keeping bank with his white thin fingers, on one of which was a large gold ring with a coat of arms. He was paying bank, thrusting the money straight and irregularly, evidently agitated by something, though he wished to appear careless. Near him, on his right, lay, leaning on his arm, a gray-haired major, who with an affectation of cold-bloodedness punted at half a rouble, and immediately paid the stakes. On the left squatted an officer with a red, perspiring face, smiling forcedly, and jesting. When his cards were beaten, he kept moving one of his hands in the empty pocket of his

trousers. He was playing at large stakes, but obviously no longer with cash, and it was this which angered the handsome, dark-complexioned man. Up and down the room walked, with a large package of paper money in his hands, a bald-headed, haggard, pale officer, with a huge nose and mouth, and he constantly put up cash on the cards, and won the stakes.

Kozeltsóv took a drink of brandy and sat down near the players.

"Won't you take a punt, Mikhaíl Seménych?" the cashier said to him. "I suppose you have brought a pile of money with you."

"Where was I to get the money from? On the contrary, I spent the last in the city."

"I don't believe it! You must have fleeced somebody at Simferopol."

"Really, I have very little," said Kozeltsóv, but evidently not wishing to be taken at his word, he unbuttoned his coat, and took the old cards into his hands.

"Well, I'll try my luck; the devil sometimes plays funny tricks! Even a gnat, you know, can do things. Only I must fortify myself by a drink."

After taking another wine-glass of brandy and some porter, he in a short time lost his last three roubles.

Against the short perspiring officer was written one hundred and fifty roubles.

"No, I have no luck," he said, carelessly taking a new card.

"Will you kindly send it?" said the cashier, stopping for a moment in his dealing, and looking at him.

"Permit me to send it to-morrow," answered the perspiring officer, getting up and convulsively rummaging through his empty pocket.

"Hm!" grumbled the cashier, and, angrily dealing to the right and left, he gave out the whole pack. "But really, this won't do," he said, putting down his cards.

"I pass. This will not do, Zákhar Iványch," he added. "We were playing for cash, and not to charge up."

"Do you doubt me? That is strange!"

"From whom am I to get it?" growled the major, who had won something like eight roubles. "I have sent up more than twenty roubles, and having won I receive nothing."

"What am I to pay with when there is no money on the table?" said the cashier.

"That is not my business!" cried the major, rising. "I am playing with you, and not with them."

The perspiring officer suddenly became excited.

"I tell you I will pay to-morrow; how dare you, then, insult me?"

"I say what I please! That is no way of doing!" cried the major.

"Stop it, Fédor Fédorych!" they all said at once, keeping back the major.

But we will draw down the curtain over the scene immediately. To-morrow, maybe this very night, every one of these men will go merrily and proudly to meet death, and will die firm and calm; but the only consolation in life, under conditions that horrify the coldest imagination, when everything humane is absent and there is no hope of emerging from the horrors, — the only consolation is forgetfulness, the annihilation of consciousness. At the bottom of the soul of each of them lies a noble spark which will make a hero of him; but this spark is not burning brightly, — there will come the fatal moment, and it will burst into a flame and will illumine great deeds.

XVII.

On the following day the bombardment was continued with the same force. At about eleven o'clock in the morning, Volódya Kozeltsóv was sitting in the circle of the battery officers, and, having become a little accustomed to them, was watching the new faces, observing, questioning, and himself talking. The modest conversation of the artillerists, with a slight pretence at learning, impressed and pleased him, while the shy, innocent, handsome exterior of Volódya gained the officers' favour for him.

The older officer of the battery, a captain, — an undersized, red-haired man, with a tuft on his crown, and with smooth temples, brought up in the old traditions of the artillery, a lady's man and presumably learned, — was interested in Volódya's knowledge of artillery, asked him about new inventions, graciously jested about his youth and handsome face, and, in general, treated him like a son, which was extremely agreeable to Volódya.

Sub-Lieutenant Dyadénko, a young officer with a Little-Russian accent, in a torn overcoat and dishevelled hair, talked in a loud voice, was all the time looking for a chance for a heated dispute, and was quick in all his motions; but he nevertheless pleased Volódya, who could not help noticing under this coarse exterior a very good and exceedingly kind man. Dyadénko continually offered his services to Volódya, and proved to him that all the ordnance at Sevastopol was not placed according to the rules.

Lieutenant Chernovítski, with high arching eyebrows,

though more polite than the rest, and dressed in a fairly clean coat, which, if it was not new, was carefully mended, and showing a gold chain on his velvet waistcoat, did not please Volódya. He kept asking what the emperor and the Minister of War were doing, told him with an unnatural ecstasy the deeds of bravery which had been performed at Sevastopol, regretted the small number of real patriots, and, in general, displayed much learning, wit, and noble sentiments; but for some reason or other all this seemed disagreeable and unnatural to Volódya. The main thing was, he had observed that the other officers did not speak to Chernovítski. Yunker Vlang, whom he had awakened the day before, was there also. He did not say anything, but, sitting modestly in the corner, laughed whenever anything funny was said, reminded people of things they had forgotten, and passed the brandy and rolled the cigarettes for the officers. Whether it was the modest, civil bearing of Volódya, who treated him like an officer, and did not disdain him like a boy, or whether it was his pleasant exterior, which so captivated Vlánga (as the soldiers called him, for some reason or other making his name a feminine), — he did not take his large kindly eyes away from the new officer, guessed and anticipated all his wishes, and all the time dwelt in a kind of amorous transport, which, of course, the officers noticed and ridiculed.

Before dinner the staff-captain was relieved in the bastion, and he joined their company. Staff-Captain Kraut was a blond, handsome, audacious officer, with long sandy moustache and whiskers; he spoke Russian excellently, but a little too well and too regularly for a Russian. In his service and in life he was the same as with his language; he served beautifully, was an excellent companion, a most reliable man in monetary affairs; but simply, as a man, even because everything was so good, there was something lacking. Like all Russian Germans he was,

in strange contradistinction to the ideal German Germans, in the highest degree practical.

"Here he is coming, our hero!" said the captain, as Kraut entered the room, waving his arms and clattering with his spurs. "What do you prefer, Friedrich Krestyánych, tea or brandy?"

"I have ordered tea got ready for me, but in the meantime I will take a dram to soothe my spirit. Very happy to make your acquaintance; I beg you to have me in your graces," he said to Volódya, who, rising, saluted him. "Staff-Captain Kraut — The cannoneer in the bastion told me that you arrived yesterday."

"I am very much obliged to you for your bed: I slept on it."

"But did you rest well? One of its legs is broken; but there is no time to fix it, — we are in a stage of siege, — something ought to be put under."

"Have things gone well while you were on duty?" asked Dyadénko.

"Passable. Only Skvortsóv caught it, and one gun-carriage was mended yesterday. They had smashed the cheek into splinters."

He rose from his seat and began to walk around; it was evident he was under the influence of the pleasant sensation of a man who has just escaped a danger.

"Well, Dmítri Gavrílych," he said, shaking the captain's knees, "how are you getting on? How is your advancement? Still mum?"

"Nothing yet."

"And there will be nothing," said Dyadénko. "I have proved it to you before."

"Why not?"

"Because you did not make the right report."

"Always disputing!" said Kraut, smiling merrily. "You are a real stubborn Little-Russian! And just to annoy you, you will get a lieutenancy."

"No, I won't."

"Vlang! Please fetch my pipe, and fill it for me," he said, turning to the yunker, who obligingly ran away to fetch the pipe.

Kraut animated them all: he told of the bombardment, asked for the news during his absence, and talked with everybody.

XVIII.

"Well? Are you all settled here, among us?" Kraut asked Volódya. "Pardon me, what is your name and patronymic? Such is the custom with us, in the artillery. Have you supplied yourself with a riding-horse?"

"No," said Volódya, "I do not know what to do. I told the captain that I had no horse and no money, unless I got my forage and travelling money. I should like for the time being to ask the commander of the battery for a horse, but I am afraid he will refuse it."

"Apollón Sergyéich!" and he produced a sound with his lips, expressive of strong doubt, and glanced at the captain. "Hardly!"

"Well, if he does refuse, there will be no great misfortune," said the captain. "To tell the truth, no horses are needed here. Still, we might try; I will ask him to-day."

"You evidently do not know him," Dyadénko put in his word. "Whatever else he may refuse, he will not refuse the horse. Do you want to wager?"

"Of course, you must contradict, as usual."

"I contradict because I know. He is stingy on everything else, but he will give horses, because it is not to his interest to refuse them."

"How can he help refusing them when oats are at eight roubles?" said Kraut. "It is to his interest not to keep a superfluous horse!"

"Ask for Starling, Vladímir Seménych!" said Vlang, returning with Kraut's pipe. "It is an excellent horse."

"From which you fell into a ditch at Magpie-ville? Ah? Vlánga?" remarked the staff-captain.

"What of it if oats are at eight roubles, as you say," Dyadénko continued to dispute, "if he marks it down at ten and a half. Of course it is to his interest."

"Why should there not something stick to his hands? If you were the commander of a battery, you would not let a horse go down-town!"

"When I shall be commander of a battery, my horses will get four measures of grain a day, and I will not make anything on them."

"We shall see," said the staff-captain. "You will do just the same, and so will he, when he commands a battery," he added, pointing to Volódya.

"What makes you think, Friedrich Krestyánych, that he will take advantage of his position?" Chernovítski chimed in. "Maybe he has wealth of his own, and won't have to take advantage."

"No, I — pardon me, captain," said Volódya, blushing up to his ears. "I regard this as ignoble."

"Oho! He has grit!" said Kraut.

"It seems to me like this: if it is not my money, I have no right to take it."

"But let me tell you something, young man," the captain began, in a more serious tone. "You know, that when you command a battery, nothing will be said, provided you do things right; the commander of the battery does not interfere with the commissary stores of the soldiers, — such has been the custom in the artillery since time immemorial. If you are a poor master, you will have nothing left. Now, this is what you have to spend money on, contrary to regulations: for shoeing — one (he bent one finger); for the drugs — two (he bent another finger); for the chancery — three; for off horses you have to pay as high as five hundred roubles apiece, my dear — that is four; you must change the soldiers'

collars; much money goes for coal; you board the officers. If you are a commander of a battery, you have to live in proper style: you need a carriage, a fur coat, and this and that — what is the use of mentioning it all?"

"But above everything else," interrupted the captain, who had all the time kept silent. "You must consider this, Vladímir Seménych: take a man like me, — he has to serve twenty years, first at a salary of two hundred, and then at three hundred roubles. Why should he not in his old age provide a piece of bread for himself?"

"What's the use of talking?" again spoke the staff-captain. "Don't be in a hurry to pass an opinion. Serve awhile, and then judge."

Volódya was dreadfully embarrassed and ashamed for having expressed himself without proper consideration, and he mumbled something and continued to listen in silence, while Dyadénko was with the greatest passion disputing the matter and proving the opposite.

The discussion was interrupted by the appearance of the colonel's orderly, calling to dinner.

"Tell Apollón Sergyéich to serve some wine," said Chernovítski, buttoning his coat, to the captain. "What makes him so stingy? If he is killed, nobody will get anything!"

"Tell him yourself!"

"No, you are the senior officer: it is necessary to have order in everything."

XIX.

The table was removed from the wall, and covered with a soiled cloth, in the very room where Volódya had reported to the colonel the evening before. The commander of the battery this time gave him his hand, and asked him about St. Petersburg and the journey.

"Well, gentlemen, he who drinks brandy, let him help himself. Ensigns don't drink," he added, smiling.

The commander of the battery did not seem as stern as on the previous day; on the contrary, he had the appearance of a kind, hospitable host and a senior comrade of the officers. Nevertheless, all the officers, from the old captain down to Ensign Dyadénko, expressed their great respect for him, by their manner of speech, while looking deferentially into his eyes, and by the shy reserve with which they went up one after another to take a drink of brandy.

The dinner consisted of a large bowl of beet soup, in which swam around fat pieces of beef and an immense quantity of pepper and laurel leaves, of Polish forcemeat with mustard, and of tripe with not very fresh butter. There were no napkins, the spoons were of tin and wood, there were only two glasses, and on the table stood only a decanter of water with a broken neck; but the dinner was not dull: the conversation never flagged.

At first, the conversation turned on the battle at Inkerman, in which the battery had taken part; each one gave his impressions and reflected on the causes of its failure, and stopped speaking, every time the commander had

anything to say; then the conversation naturally passed to the insufficiency of the calibre of the light guns, and to the new lighter cannon, which gave Volódya a chance to display his knowledge of artillery. The conversation did not dwell on the present terrible condition of Sevastopol, as though each had been thinking too much of the subject to mention it. Similarly, the duties of the service, which were to devolve on Volódya, were not referred to at all, to his surprise and mortification, as though he had arrived in Sevastopol only to tell of the lighter guns, and to dine with the commander of the battery. During their dinner, a bomb fell not far from the house where they were sitting. The floor and walls shook as from an earthquake, and the windows were shrouded by a powder smoke.

"I suppose you have not seen anything like this in St. Petersburg; here we get such surprises often," said the commander of the battery.

"Vlang, go and see where it has exploded."

Vlang went out and reported that it was in the square, and that was the last thing said about the bomb.

Just before the end of the dinner, an old man, the scribe of the battery, entered the room with three sealed envelopes, which he handed to the commander of the battery.

'This one is very pressing. A Cossack has brought it from the chief of artillery."

All the officers looked in impatient expectancy at the fingers of the commander, which were quite used to breaking such seals, and which took out the very pressing document. "What could it be?" each one asked himself. It might mean leaving Sevastopol altogether, taking a rest, or an order for the whole battery to take up positions in the bastions.

"Again!" said the commander of the battery, angrily flinging the paper on the table.

"What is it, Apollón Sergyéich?" asked the senior officer.

"They are asking for an officer with the crew for some mortar battery. As it is, I lack four officers and the crew for the full complement," grumbled the commander of the battery, "and they want to take away another — Well, somebody will have to go, gentlemen," he said, after a moment's silence. "The order is to be on the barricade at seven o'clock — Send for the sergeant! Gentlemen, who will go? Decide," he repeated.

"He has not been yet," said Chernovítski, pointing to Volódya.

The commander of the battery made no reply.

"Yes, I should like to," said Volódya, feeling a cold perspiration on his back and neck.

"Why should he?" the captain interrupted him. "Of course, no one will refuse, neither would one beg for the favour; if Apollón Sergyéich leaves the matter to us, let us cast lots, as we did the last time."

Everybody agreed to it. Kraut cut some slips of paper, rolled them up, and threw them into a cap. The captain was playful and even had the courage to ask the colonel for some wine, in order to brace himself, as he said. Dyadénko was gloomy, Volódya had a smile on his face. Chernovítski insisted that he would have to go, and Kraut was entirely at ease.

Volódya was the first to draw. He picked up a paper which was longer than the rest, but it suddenly occurred to him to exchange it for another, which was smaller and thinner, and, upon opening it, he read, "To go!"

"I have to," he said, with a sigh.

"Well, God protect you! You'll get your fire baptism at once," said the commander of the battery, glancing with a kindly smile at the disturbed face of the ensign. "Get ready at once! To make it more cheerful for you, Vlang will go with you as gun-sergeant."

XX.

Vlang was exceedingly well satisfied with his appointment, ran at once to get ready, and, all dressed up, came back to help Volódya; he tried to persuade him to take along a cot, a fur coat, some old numbers of the "Memoirs of the Fatherland," the coffee-pot with the spirit-lamp, and other unnecessary things. The captain advised Volódya first to read from the Manual about the firing from mortars, and to copy out the tables. Volódya at once sat down to work, and, to his agreeable surprise, he discovered that, although he was still disturbed by the terror of the danger and even more by his dread of being a coward, these feelings were not so powerful as on the previous day. This was partly due to the influence of daylight and his activity, and partly to the fact that fear, like every powerful sensation, cannot last in the same measure for any length of time. In short, he had emerged from his affright. At about seven o'clock, just as the sun was beginning to set behind the Nicholas barracks, the sergeant entered and announced that the men were in readiness, and waiting for him.

"I have given Vlánga the list. Please ask him for it, your Honour!" he said.

About twenty artillerymen, in short swords without their loading implements, were standing around the corner of the house. Volódya walked over to them with the yunker.

"Shall I deliver a short speech to them, or simply say, 'Good evening, boys!' and nothing else?" he thought.

"Why should I not say, 'Good evening, boys!' It is certainly proper." He boldly shouted in his sonorous voice, "Good evening, boys!" The soldiers cheerfully returned the greeting; his youthful, fresh voice rang agreeably to their ears.

Volódya marched briskly at the head of the soldiers, and though his heart beat as though he had run several versts at full speed, his gait was light and his face cheerful. As they were ascending the hill leading to the Malákhov Mound, he noticed that Vlang, who did not fall a step behind him, and who at home had the appearance of such a courageous man, constantly walked to one side and lowered his head, as though all the bombs and shells, which were whistling past with extraordinary frequency, were flying straight at him. A few of the soldiers acted in the same manner, and in most faces, in general, was expressed restlessness, if not fear. These circumstances completely calmed Volódya and gave him courage.

"So, here I am myself on the Malákhov Mound, which I had imagined a thousand times more terrible! I, too, can walk without stooping before the shells, and I am less frightened than the rest! So I am not a coward!" he thought, with delight and even with a certain measure of rapturous self-satisfaction.

This sentiment was soon shaken by the spectacle which he encountered at dusk in the Kornílov battery, while trying to find the chief of the bastion. Four sailors, near the breastwork, were holding a blood-stained corpse of a soldier without boots and overcoat, and were swinging it, in their attempt to throw it over the breastwork. (On the second day of the bombardment they did not in all places succeed in taking all the bodies away from the bastions, and so they threw them into the ditch in order to get them out of the way.)

Volódya stood petrified for a minute when he saw the

body strike the top of the breastwork and then roll down into the ditch; but, fortunately for him, he here met the chief of the bastion, who gave him his orders and provided him with a guide to take him to the battery and to the blindage intended for his crew. We shall not stop to tell how many more dangers and disenchantments our hero passed through on that night; how, instead of the firing which he had seen on the Volkhóv Field, under all the conditions of precision and order, which he had expected to find here, he found two smashed mortars, the mouth of one of which had been dented by a cannon-ball, while the other was standing on the splinters of a demolished platform; how he could not get any workmen before morning, in order to mend the platform; how not a single charge was of the weight laid down in the Manual; how two soldiers under his command were wounded; and how his life had been hanging on a hair more than twenty times.

Luckily he was assisted by a gun-captain of enormous size, a sailor, who had been with the mortars in the beginning of the siege, and who convinced him of the possibility of putting them in action. He led him, with a lamp in his hand, all night through the bastion, as though it were his garden, and promised to fix everything in the morning.

The blindage to which his guide took him had been dug out in the stony ground; it was an elongated ditch of about two cubic fathoms in size, covered with oak yard beams. Here he took up his position with all his soldiers. The moment Vlang caught sight of the low three-foot door of the blindage, he rushed headlong into it before all the rest, and almost hurt himself against the stone floor, in trying to reach the farthest corner, from which he did not emerge. When all the soldiers had seated themselves on the floor along the wall, and some of them had lighted their pipes, Volódya arranged his bed

in the corner, lighted a candle, began to smoke a cigarette, and lay down on the cot.

Above the blindage continuous reports were heard, but not very loudly except from one gun, which stood near by, and with its booming shook the blindage. In the blindage itself, everything was quiet; but now and then the soldiers, still feeling strange before their new officer, would talk softly to each other, asking this one to move a little and that one to give them a light for their pipes; or a rat was scratching somewhere between the stones; or Vlang, who had not yet regained his composure, and wildly looked about him, suddenly uttered a loud sigh. Volódya on his bed, in his quiet corner crowded by people and lighted up by one candle, experienced the sensation of comfort which used to come over him when as a child he played hide-and-seek and concealed himself in the safe, or under his mother's skirt, where, not daring to breathe, he listened attentively, and was afraid of the darkness, but at the same time derived pleasure from it. He was both a little ill at ease and cheerful.

XXI.

Some ten minutes later the soldiers grew bolder, and began to converse. Near the light and the officer's bed, two soldiers of more importance, being cannoneers, had taken up their position: one of them was gray-haired and old, and had all the medals but the Cross of St. George; the other, a young cantonist,[1] was smoking twisted cigarettes. The drummer, as usual, took upon himself the duty of waiting on the officer. The bombardiers and cavaliers sat next, and farther in the shadow, near the door, the "submissive" took up their seats. It was among the latter that the conversation began. The cause for it was the noise produced by a man who darted into the blindage.

"Well, brother, you could not sit it out in the street? Are the girls singing merry songs?" said one voice.

"They are singing marvellous songs, such as we have never heard in the village," said, smiling, the man who had rushed into the blindage.

"Vásin is not fond of bombs, no, he isn't!" said one in the aristocratic corner.

"Well, when there is any need, it is a different matter!" slowly spoke Vásin, and whenever he said something, all the others kept silent. "On the 24th there was a terrible fire; but what is there bad in this? You will only be killed uselessly, and the authorities don't say 'Thanks' to us fellows for it."

[1] Soldiers brought up since early childhood in special colonies called cantons.

At these words of Vásin all laughed.

"Now there is Mélnikov, and he is all the time sitting outside," somebody remarked.

"Call him in, that Mélnikov," added the old cannoneer. "Really, he will be only killed, for nothing."

"Who is that Mélnikov?" asked Volódya.

"One of our foolish soldiers, your Honour. He is afraid of absolutely nothing, and is all the time walking about outside. You ought to see him: he looks just like a bear."

"He knows a charm," Vásin said, in a drawling voice, from the farther corner.

Mélnikov entered the blindage. He was stout (this is extraordinary among soldiers), red-haired, and red in his face, with an enormous arched brow, and bulging, light blue eyes.

"Are you afraid of the bombs?" Volódya asked him.

"What sense is there in being afraid of bombs?" replied Mélnikov, crouching, and scratching himself. "I sha'n't be killed by a bomb, I know that."

"So you would like to live here?"

"Of course, I should like to. It is jolly here!" he said, suddenly bursting forth in a laugh.

"Then we shall have to take you out on a sortie! If you want to, I will tell the general," said Volódya, though he did not know a single general.

"Why should I not want to go? I do want to!"

Mélnikov disappeared behind the others.

"Let us play at *noski*,[1] boys! Who has cards?" was heard his hurried voice.

Indeed, in a short time a game was started in the farther corner, and one could hear them striking the nose, laughing, and calling trumps. Volódya drank some tea from the samovár, which the drummer had made for him,

[1] A game at cards, in which the loser is struck on the nose with the cards.

treated the cannoneers, joked, talked with them, wishing to become popular with them, and was very much satisfied with the respect which they showed him. The soldiers, too, talked more freely when they noticed that their officer was a simple man. One of them was saying that the siege of Sevastopol would soon be raised, because a reliable naval man had told him that Constantine, the Tsar's brother, was coming to our relief with a Merican fleet, and that soon there would be made a truce not to fire for two weeks, and whosoever should fire would have to pay seventy-five kopeks for every shot.

Vásin, who, as Volódya could make out, was a small man, with large, kindly eyes and with whiskers, told, amidst a universal silence, and then laughter, how, when he had gone home on a leave of absence, they were at first delighted to see him, but how later his father sent him out to work and the forester sent his carriage for his wife. All this amused Volódya greatly. He not only did not experience the slightest fear or displeasure from the closeness and oppressive odour in the blindage, but everything was cheerful and pleasant to him.

Many soldiers were snoring. Vlang, too, had stretched himself out on the floor, and the old cannoneer, having spread his overcoat and making the sign of the cross, was mumbling some prayers before his sleep, when Volódya took it into his head to go out and see what was going on.

"Remove your legs!" the soldiers cried to each other, when he got up, and the legs drew back and made a way for him.

Vlang, who seemed to be asleep, suddenly raised his head and took Volódya by the fold of his overcoat.

"Don't go, I beg you! What's the use?" he said, in a tone of tearful persuasiveness. "You do not know, evidently, that the shells are falling there all the time: it is better here."

In spite of Vlang's entreaties, Volódya made his way out of the blindage, and sat down on the threshold, where Mélnikov was already sitting.

The air was pure and fresh, — especially as compared with the blindage, — and the night was clear and calm. Amidst the roar of the cannonade could be heard the sounds of the wheels and carts that brought the gabions, and the conversation of the men working on a powder-room. Overhead was the high starry heaven, through which constantly flashed the fiery streaks of the bombs; toward the left, at a distance of three feet, a small opening led into another blindage, in which could be seen the legs and backs of the sailors who were living in it, and could be heard their voices; in front was visible the elevation of the powder-room, past which flitted the figures of stooping men, and on the very summit of which, under the bullets and bombs which uninterruptedly whistled about that place, stood a tall form in a black mantle, with its hands in its pockets, stamping down the earth which others brought there in bags. Quite frequently a bomb flew by and burst near the powder-room. The soldiers who were carrying the dirt crouched and sidled, but the black figure did not move; it continued to stamp down the earth with its feet, remaining all the time in one spot.

"Who is that black figure?" Volódya asked of Mélnikov.

"I do not know. I will go and see."

"Don't go! It is unnecessary."

But Mélnikov paid no attention, got up, walked over to the man in black, and for quite awhile stood just as unconcerned and immovable near him.

"He is in charge of the powder-room, your Honour!" he said, upon returning. "The powder-room has been torn up by a bomb, so the infantrymen are putting on some earth."

Occasionally the bombs flew straight at the door of the blindage, it seemed. Then Volódya pressed himself into the corner, and again came out to see whether they were flying in his direction. Though Vlang, inside the blindage, entreated him several times to come back, Volódya remained about three hours on the threshold, experiencing a certain pleasure in tempting fate, and watching the flight of the bombs. Toward the end of the evening he was able to make out how many guns were in operation, and where they were stationed, and where the projectiles lodged.

XXII.

On the following day, the 27th, Volódya, after a ten hours' sleep, went out early in the morning on the threshold of the blindage, feeling refreshed and full of life. Vlang came out with him, but at the first sound of a bullet he rushed headlong into the opening of the blindage, making a way for himself with his head, amidst the universal laughter of the soldiers, most of whom had come out into the fresh air. Only Vlang, the old cannoneer, and a few others rarely went out into the trench; it was impossible to keep the others back: all of them rushed out of the foul blindage into the fresh morning air, and, in spite of the bombardment, which continued as severe as on the previous day, they lay down near the threshold and the breastwork. Mélnikov had been strolling along the batteries ever since daybreak, glancing upwards with indifference.

Near the threshold sat two old soldiers and a young curly-headed Jew, who had been detailed from the infantry. This Jew picked up a bullet, which was lying near him, and with a piece of iron flattened it against a stone; then he cut out of it with a knife a cross resembling the Cross of St. George; the others were talking and watching his work. The cross was really well made.

"If we are to stay here any length of time," said one of them, "we shall get our discharge as soon as peace is concluded."

"Of course. I have only four years left to my discharge, and I have passed five months in Sevastopol."

"That does not count toward the discharge, do you hear?" said another.

Just then a cannon-ball whistled past the heads of the speakers, and struck the ground within three feet of Mélnikov, who was walking up to them in the trench.

"It almost killed Mélnikov," said one.

"No, it won't," replied Mélnikov.

"Here, take this cross for your bravery," said the young soldier who had made the cross, and handed it to Mélnikov.

"No, brother, here a month is counted a year, — there was such an order," they continued their conversation.

"Take it as you please, but as soon as peace is concluded, there will be a review by the Tsar at Warsaw, and if they will not give us our discharge, they will give us an unlimited leave of absence."

Suddenly a whining, deflected bullet flew above the heads of the speakers, and struck against a stone.

"If you don't look out, you will get a clear discharge before evening," said one of the soldiers.

Everybody laughed.

And not as late as the evening, but two hours later, two of them received a clear discharge, and five were wounded; but the rest joked as before.

In the morning two mortars were so far mended that it was possible to shoot from them. At about ten o'clock, the order having been received from the chief of the bastion, Volódya called out his command, and with it went to the battery.

Not a particle of that feeling of fear, which had been expressed in the soldiers' faces the evening before, when they first came out for their work, was noticeable in them now. Vlang alone could not control himself: he kept hiding and crouching as before, and Vásin lost

something of his composure, and was flurried and constantly squatted. But Volódya was in a rapturous state: the thought of danger did not even occur to him. The joy of doing his duty, of finding himself not only not a coward, but even a brave man, the sensation of commanding, and the presence of twenty men, who, he knew, watched him with curiosity, made of him a gallant fellow. He was even proud of his bravery, showed off before his soldiers, walked out on the banquette, and purposely unbuttoned his overcoat so that he could be easily noticed. The chief of the bastion, who at this time was making the round of his estate, as he expressed himself, though he had become accustomed to all kinds of bravery in the last eight months, could not help admiring this handsome boy, in his unbuttoned overcoat, beneath which could be seen a red shirt clasping a white, tender neck, with his face and eyes aflame, clapping his hands, and commanding in a sonorous voice, "First, second!" and gaily rushing out on the breastwork to see where his bomb would settle. At half-past eleven the firing died down on both sides, and precisely at twelve o'clock began the storming of the second, third, and fifth bastions of the Malákhov Mound.

XXIII.

On the nearer side of the bay, between Inkerman and the Northern fortification, on a telegraph mound, two sailors were standing about noon; one, an officer, was looking through the telescope at Sevastopol, and the other had just come on horseback to the high post with a Cossack.

The sun stood bright and high above the bay, which was resplendent with a gay, warm sheen, as it swayed its moored ships and moving sails and boats. A light breeze barely rustled the leaves of the withering oak brush near the telegraph, filled the sails of the boats, and rocked the waves. Sevastopol, the same as before, with its unfinished church, its column, its quay, its boulevard, gleaming in its green colour on the hill, its artistic library building, its diminutive azure inlets, filled with masts, its picturesque aqueduct arches, and its clouds of blue powder smoke, now and then illuminated by the purple flame of the gun fires, — the same proud, festive Sevastopol, surrounded on one side by yellow smoking hills, and on the other by the bright green sea glimmering in the sun, was visible on the other side of the bay.

Above the horizon of the sea, where a streak of black smoke rose from a steamer, crept a long white cloud, portending a wind. Along the whole line of the fortifications, especially along the hills on the left side, constantly puffed up masses of thick, compressed white smoke, several at a time, accompanied by flashes which now and then gleamed forth even in the bright midday light; they

spread, assuming various forms, rose in the air, and were tinged with darker hues against the sky. These puffs, flashing now here, now there, had their birth on the hills, in the batteries of the enemy, in the city, and high up in the air. The sounds of explosions were never interrupted, and, mingling, shook the air.

About noon the puffs of smoke became rarer and rarer, and the atmosphere was less shaken by the booming of the cannon.

"The second bastion is not returning the fire at all," said the officer of the hussars, who was on horseback. "It is all smashed! It is terrible!"

"And Malákhov seems to be returning one shot to three of theirs," said the one who was looking through the telescope. "It drives me wild to hear their silence. They are continually hitting the Kornílov battery, but there is no reply."

"Just see! I told you that they always stopped bombarding about noon. It is just so to-day. Come, let us ride to our breakfast — they are waiting for us — there is no use looking —"

"Wait, don't bother me!" answered the one who was watching through the glasses, looking with unusual curiosity at Sevastopol.

"What is it? What?"

"There is some motion in the trenches: they are marching in close columns."

"That can be seen with the naked eye," said the sailor. "They are marching in columns. I must give a signal."

"Look there, look! They have come out of the trenches."

In fact, it could be seen with the naked eye that dark spots were moving down the hill, across the ravine, from the French batteries to the bastions. In front of these dots could be observed dark streaks near our line. In the bastions the white smoke of shots puffed up in different

places, as though running across. The wind carried the sound of an uninterrupted musketry fire, like the pattering of the rain against the window-panes. The black streaks moved about in the smoke, coming nearer and nearer. The sounds of the fusilade, growing stronger and stronger, blended into one prolonged, rumbling peal. The smoke, rising more and more frequently, passed rapidly along the line and finally fused into one contracting and expanding lilac cloud, in which now and then flashed fires and black dots. All the sounds were united in one rumbling, crackling noise.

"An assault!" said the officer, with a pale face, passing the telescope to the sailor.

Cossacks galloped by along the road. Officers on horseback, the commander-in-chief in a carriage and accompanied by his suite, passed by. On each face could be seen heavy agitation and breathless expectancy.

"It is impossible they should have taken it!" said the officer on horseback.

"Upon my word, a banner! Look! look!" said the other, choking with excitement and going away from the telescope. "A French banner on Malákhov Mound."

"Impossible!"

XXIV.

Kozeltsóv the elder, who had managed in the night to win back all he had lost and again to lose everything, even the gold coins which were sewn into the lining, was early in the morning sleeping an unhealthy, oppressive, but profound sleep in the defensive barracks of the fifth bastion when, repeated by different voices, the fatal cry was passed.

"Alarm!"

"Get up, Mikháylo Seménych! There is an assault!" shouted somebody.

"Some schoolboy," he said, incredulously, opening his eyes.

But suddenly he saw an officer who was running without any obvious purpose from one corner into another and with such a pale face that he understood everything. The thought that he might be taken for a coward who did not wish to go out with his company at a critical minute affected him powerfully. He flew to his company at full speed. The firing from the ordnance had stopped, but the crackling of the musketry fire was at full blast. The bullets whistled not one at a time, as from carbines, but in swarms, like birds of passage in the autumn, flying overhead. The whole place, where the day before had stood his battalion, was shrouded in smoke, and there were heard discordant cries and shouts. Soldiers, wounded and not wounded, he encountered in throngs. After running some thirty paces more he saw his company pressing against the wall.

"They have taken Schwartz," said a young officer. "Everything is lost!"

"Nonsense," he said, angrily, drawing his small dull iron sword and shouting:

"Forward, boys! Hurrah!"

His voice was loud and sonorous. It awoke Kozeltsóv himself. He ran ahead along the traverse. About fifty soldiers rushed after him. He ran out from behind the traverse upon the open square. Bullets flew literally like hail. Two of them struck him; but where, and what they had done, whether they had bruised or wounded him, he had no time to decide. In front of him he could in the smoke see blue uniforms, red trousers, and hear the sounds of a foreign speech. One Frenchman was standing on the breastwork, waving his cap and shouting something. Kozeltsóv was convinced that he would be killed, and this gave him more courage. He ran forward, ever onward. A few soldiers outran him. Other soldiers appeared from both sides and were running too. The blue uniforms remained at the same distance, running from him back to their trenches, but under his feet he stepped on wounded and dead soldiers. Having reached the outer ditch everything became confused in Kozeltsóv's eyes and he felt a pain in his breast.

Half an hour later he lay on a stretcher near the Nicholas barracks and he knew that he was wounded; but he felt hardly any pain. All he wanted was to get something cold to drink and to lie down quietly.

A short fat doctor with large black whiskers went up to him and unbuttoned his overcoat. Kozeltsóv looked down his chin at what the doctor was doing with his wound and at the doctor's face, but he felt no pain. The doctor covered the wound with the shirt, wiped his fingers on the folds of his overcoat, and silently, without looking at the wounded officer, walked over to another. Kozeltsóv unconsciously followed with his eyes everything that

was going on in his presence, and, recalling what had happened in the fifth bastion, thought with an extremely pleasant sensation of self-satisfaction of his having well executed his duty, of having for the first time during his service acted well, and of having no cause whatsoever for regrets. The doctor, who was dressing the wound of another wounded soldier, pointed to Kozeltsóv and said something to a priest with a long red beard who was standing near by with a cross.

"Shall I die?" Kozeltsóv asked the priest, when the latter went up to him.

The priest did not reply, but said a prayer, and handed the cross to the wounded man.

Death did not frighten Kozeltsóv. He took the cross with his feeble hands, pressed it to his lips, and sobbed.

"Well, have the French been repulsed?" he firmly asked the priest.

"Victory is entirely with us," replied the priest, in order to console the wounded man, concealing from him the fact that on Malákhov Mound the French banner was already floating.

"Thank God," said the wounded man, unconscious of the tears that coursed down his cheeks.

The thought of his brother for an instant crossed his mind. "God grant him the same good fortune!" he thought.

XXV.

But a different fate awaited Volódya. He was listening to a fable, which Vásin was telling him, when there came the shout, "The French are coming!" The blood rushed at once to Volódya's heart, and he felt his cheeks grow cold and pale. He remained motionless for a second; but, on looking around, he saw that the soldiers were buttoning their overcoats with a great deal of composure, and leaving the blindage one after another; one of them, Mélnikov in all probability, said, jestingly:

"Meet them with bread and salt, boys!"

Volódya crept with Vlang, who did not leave him a pace's length, out of the blindage, and ran to the battery. There was no artillery fire, neither on this, nor on the other side. He was roused not so much by the sight of the soldiers' composure, as at the yunker's pitiable, undisguised cowardice. "Is it possible I could be like him?" he thought, and cheerfully ran to the breastwork, near which stood his mortars. He could plainly see how the French were running straight at him across the clear space, and how crowds of them, with their bayonets gleaming in the sun, were stirring in the nearest trenches.

A short, broad-shouldered man, in a zouave uniform and short sword, was running in front and leaping over ditches. "Fire the canister-shot!" shouted Volódya, running down from the banquette; but the soldiers had taken measures without him, and the metallic sound of the discharged canister-shot whistled over his head, first from one mortar, and then from the other. "The first!

The second!" commanded Volódya, running along from one mortar to another, entirely forgetful of the danger. On both sides of him were heard the crackling of the musketry fire of our epaulement, and the shouts of bustling people.

Suddenly a piercing cry of despair, repeated by several voices, was heard on the left: "They are outflanking us! They are outflanking us!" Volódya turned back to look in the direction of the cries. Some twenty Frenchmen appeared from behind. One of them, with a black beard, a handsome man, was in the lead; having run up to within ten steps of the battery, he stopped and fired straight at Volódya, then again ran toward him. For a second Volódya stood as if petrified, and did not trust his eyes. When he regained his senses and looked around, the blue uniforms appeared in front of him, on the breastwork; and within ten paces of him two Frenchmen were spiking a cannon. Around him was no one but Mélnikov, who had been killed at his side, and Vlang, who had seized a handspike and, with a furious expression on his face and with downcast pupils, had rushed forward.

"Follow me, Vladímir Seménych! After me!" cried the desperate voice of Vlang, who was flourishing the handspike in the face of the Frenchmen who had come up from behind. The furious figure of the yunker baffled them. To the one in front he dealt a blow on the head, the others involuntarily stopped, and Vlang, continually looking around and crying, "After me, Vladímir Seménych! Why do you stand? Run!" dashed down to the trench, where lay our infantry, shooting at the French. After leaping into the trench, he again raised his head from it, to see what his beloved ensign was doing. Something, wrapped in an overcoat, was lying prone in the place where Volódya had been standing, and all that place was occupied by Frenchmen firing at us.

XXVI.

Vlang found his battery on the second defensive line. Out of the number of twenty soldiers who had been with the mortar battery, only eight had saved themselves.

At nine o'clock in the evening, Vlang with his battery crossed to the Northern side on a steamer that was filled with soldiers, guns, horses, and wounded. There was no firing. The stars gleamed brightly in the sky as on the previous night; but a stiff breeze was agitating the sea. In the first and second bastions fires flashed low to the ground; explosions shook the air and illuminated about them strange black objects and the stones that were flying in the air. Something was on fire near the docks, and the red flames were reflected in the water. The bridge, filled with people, was lighted up by the fire from the Nicholas battery. A large flame seemed to be hovering over the water on the distant promontory of the Alexander battery, illuminating the lower part of a cloud of smoke that hung over it, and the same quiet, bold, distant fires glimmered on the sea from the hostile fleet. A fresh breeze swayed the bay. In the light of the burning structures could be seen the masts of our sinking vessels disappearing deeper and deeper in the water.

There was no conversation on deck; only, between the even sounds of the parted waves and the puffing chimney, one could hear the horses snorting and stamping their feet on the ferry, the orders of the captain, and the groans of the wounded. Vlang, who had not eaten anything the whole day, drew a piece of bread from his pocket and

began to munch it, but suddenly he thought of Volódya, and began to weep so loudly that the soldiers, who sat near him, could hear it.

"I declare, our Vlánga is eating bread by himself and weeping by himself," said Vásin.

"Wonderful!" said another.

"See there, they have set fire to our barracks," continued he, sighing. "How many of our brothers have lost their lives there! And after all the French got it!"

"At least we got out alive, and the Lord be praised for that!" said Vásin.

"Still it is aggravating!"

"What is aggravating? Do you suppose *he* will have an easy time here? Not a bit of it! You will see, ours will take it back! No matter how many of us shall be killed, let God want it, and the emperor wish it, and it will be retaken! Do you think we will leave it to *him?* Not a bit of it! Nothing but the bare walls left: the bulwarks are blown up — *he* has placed his pennon on the Mound, but dares not go down to the city."

"Just wait, we will square up accounts with you, — just give us a chance," he concluded, addressing the Frenchmen.

"Of course we will!" said another, with conviction.

All along the bastions of Sevastopol, which had for so many months been boiling with such extraordinary energetic life, which had for so many months seen heroes taking the place of those who had been killed, only to die themselves, and which for so many months had inspired terror, hatred, and finally the raptures of the enemy, all along the bastions of Sevastopol there was nobody left. Everything was dead, wild, terrible, but not quiet; the work of destruction was still going on. On the uneven ground, ploughed up by new explosions, lay everywhere twisted gun-carriages, jamming down the corpses of Russian and French soldiers; heavy cast-iron

cannon, for ever silenced and by a tremendous force hurled down into ditches and half-covered with dirt, bombs, shells; again corpses, ditches, splinters of beams, of blindages, and again silent corpses in gray and blue overcoats. All this was frequently convulsed and illuminated by the purple flame of explosions, which continued to shake the air.

The enemies saw that something incomprehensible was taking place in Sevastopol. These explosions and the dead silence in the bastions made them shudder; but they did not dare to believe, under the influence of the quiet, forceful defence of the day, that their imperturbable foe had disappeared, and they awaited in silence, without stirring, and with trepidation, the end of the gloomy night.

The army of Sevastopol, like the sea in a gloomy, billowing night, surging and receding, and agitatedly quivering in all its mass, swaying near the bay, on the bridge and on the Northern side, moved slowly in the impenetrable darkness, away from the place, where it had left so many brave brothers, — away from the place, which had been watered by its blood, — from the place, which for eleven months had withstood an enemy twice as numerous, and which now it was to abandon without a battle.

The first impression of this order was incomprehensibly heavy for every Russian. The next feeling was a fear of being pursued. Men felt themselves defenceless the moment they left the places where they had been accustomed to fight, and with trepidation crowded at the entrance of the bridge, which swayed in the stiff breeze. Clanking their bayonets against each other, crowding between the baggage and ordnance, the infantry were making their way with difficulty; officers on horseback carrying orders pushed their way through the masses; the inhabitants and orderlies, with their baggage which was not permitted across, wept and entreated in vain; the

artillery, with rattling wheels, descended to the bay, hastening to get away as soon as possible.

Aside from their different absorbing occupations, the feeling of self-preservation and the desire to get away at once from this terrible place of death was present in the soul of each. This feeling was present in the mortally wounded soldier, lying among five hundred similarly wounded men, on the stony ground of the St. Paul's quay and asking for death; in the reserve militiaman, using his utmost effort to press himself into the dense throng, in order to make way for the general on horseback; in the general, superintending with firmness the retreat across the bay, and restraining the undue haste of the soldiers; in the sailor, caught in the moving battalion and almost choked to death by a swaying throng; in the wounded officer, carried on a stretcher by four soldiers, who, oppressed by the congested mass, put him down on the ground near the Nicholas battery; in the artillerist, who, having served with his gun for sixteen years, was now executing an order of his superiors, quite incomprehensible to him, and with the aid of his comrades pushing the gun down the steep embankment into the bay; and in the sailors of the fleet, who, having scuttled their vessels, were giving way on the boats in which they were rowing away from them.

Upon reaching the other side of the bridge, nearly every soldier took off his cap and made the sign of the cross. But behind this feeling was another, oppressive, gnawing, deeper feeling, one that resembled repentance, shame, and anger. Nearly every soldier, looking from the Northern side upon deserted Sevastopol, sighed with an inexpressible bitterness in his heart, and swore vengeance on the foe.

THE CUTTING OF THE FOREST

The Story of a Yunker
1854–1855

THE CUTTING OF THE FOREST

The Story of a Yunker

I.

In midwinter of 185– the division of our battery was doing frontier service in the Great Chechnyá. Having learned, on the evening of the 14th of February, that the platoon, which I was to command in the absence of the officer, was detailed for the following day to cut timber, and having received and given the proper orders on that very evening, I repaired earlier than usual to my tent; as I did not have the bad habit of warming it up with burning coal, I lay down in my clothes on my bed, which was constructed of paling, drew my lambskin cap down to my eyes, wrapped myself in a fur coat, and fell into that peculiar, profound, and heavy sleep which one sleeps in moments of alarm and agitation before an imminent peril. The expectancy of the engagement of the following day had induced that condition in me.

At three o'clock in the morning, while it was still very dark, somebody pulled the warm fur coat from me, and the purple light of a candle disagreeably startled my sleepy eyes.

"Please get up!" said somebody's voice. I closed my

eyes, unconsciously pulled the fur coat over me, and again fell asleep. "Please get up!" repeated Dmítri, pitilessly shaking me by the shoulder. "The infantry is starting." I suddenly recalled the actuality, shuddered, and sprang to my feet. Having swallowed in a hurry a glass of tea and washed myself with ice-crusted water, I went out of the tent and walked over to the park (the place where the ordnance is stationed).

It was dark, misty, and cold. The night fires, which glimmered here and there in the camp, lighting up the figures of the drowsy soldiers who were lying about them, only intensified the darkness by their purple glamour. Near by one could hear the even, calm snoring of men; in the distance there was the motion, talking, and clanking of the infantry's weapons, getting ready for the march; there was an odour of smoke, dung, slow-matches, and mist; a morning chill ran down one's back, and one's teeth involuntarily clattered against each other.

By the snorting and occasional stamping alone could one make out, in this impenetrable darkness, where the hitched-up limbers and caissons were standing, and only by the burning dots of the linstocks could one tell where the ordnance was. With the words, "God be with you!" the first gun began to clatter, then the caisson rattled, and the platoon was on the move. We took off our hats and made the sign of the cross. Having taken up its position among the infantry, the platoon stopped, and for about fifteen minutes awaited the drawing up of the whole column and the arrival of the commander.

"We lack one soldier, Nikoláy Petróvich!" said, approaching me, a black figure, which I recognized by the voice only as being that of the platoon gun-sergeant, Maksímov.

"Who is it?"

"Velenchúk is not here. As we were hitching up, he was here, and I saw him, but now he is gone."

As there was no reason to suppose that the column would march at once, we decided to send Lance Corporal Antónov to find Velenchúk. Soon after, several horsemen galloped past us in the darkness: that was the commander with his suite; immediately there was a stir, the van of the column started, and then we began to march, — but Antónov and Velenchúk were not with us. We had scarcely taken one hundred steps, when both soldiers caught up with us.

"Where was he?" I asked of Antónov.

"Asleep in the park."

"Is he drunk?"

"No, sir."

"Why, then, did he go to sleep?"

"I can't tell you."

For something like three hours we moved slowly in the same silence and darkness over unploughed, snowless fields and low bushes, which crackled under the wheels of the ordnance. Finally, after fording a shallow, but extremely rapid torrent, we halted, and in the van could be heard intermittent volleys of musketry. These sounds, as always, had an awakening effect upon all. The detachment seemed to have wakened from slumber: in the ranks could be heard conversation, animation, and laughter. Some soldiers were wrestling with their comrades; others leaped now on one foot, now on another; others again were munching their hardtack, or, to pass the time, pretended to stand sentry or keep time walking. In the meantime the mist was becoming perceptibly white in the east, the dampness grew more penetrating, and the surrounding objects emerged more and more from the darkness. I could discern the green gun-carriages and caissons, the brass of the ordnance, covered by a misty dampness, the familiar forms of my soldiers, and the bay horses, which I had involuntarily learned to know down to their minutest details, and the rows of the infantry,

with their sparkling bayonets, knapsacks, wad-hooks, and kettles over their backs.

Shortly afterward we were again put in motion, taken a couple of hundred steps across the field, and had a place pointed out to us. On the right could be seen the steep bank of a winding brook and tall wooden posts of a Tartar cemetery; on the left and in front of us shimmered a black streak, through the mist. The platoon came down from the limbers. The eighth company, which was flanking us, stacked arms, and a battalion of soldiers went into the woods with guns and axes.

Less than five minutes had elapsed when on all sides crackled and burned camp-fires; the soldiers scattered about them, fanning the fire with their hands and feet, carrying boughs and logs, and in the forest resounded without interruption hundreds of axes and falling trees.

The artillerists, vying with the infantrymen, had made a fire of their own, and though it was burning so well that it was impossible to come within two paces of it, and a dense smoke was passing through the ice-crusted branches, from which drops fell sizzling into the fire, and which the soldiers kept pressing down with their feet, and though coal had formed underneath the fire, and the grass was burnt white all around it, — the soldiers were not yet satisfied; they dragged up whole logs, threw steppe-grass upon it, and fanned it more and more.

As I went up to the camp-fire to light a cigarette, Velenchúk, who was always officious, but who now, having failed in his duty, was unduly busy about the fire, in an attack of zeal pulled out with his naked hand a burning coal from the very middle, and, vaulting it a couple of times from one hand to another, threw it down on the ground.

"You had better light a stick and hand it," said some one.

"Hand him the linstock, boys!" cried another.

When I finally lighted my cigarette without Velenchúk's aid, who was again ready to pick up the coal with his hands, he wiped his singed fingers against the hind skirts of his fur coat, and, evidently anxious to be doing something, lifted a large plane-tree log and flung it into the fire with all his might. When, at last, it seemed to him that it was time to rest himself, he went up as near as he could to the burning wood, spread his overcoat, which he wore like a mantle on the back button, extended in front of him his large black hands, and, distorting his mouth a little, blinked with his eyes.

"Ah, I have forgotten my pipe. That's bad, brothers!" he said, after a moment's silence, and addressing no one in particular.

II.

In Russia there are three prevailing types of soldiers, among which may be classed the soldiers of all the armies: of the Caucasus, the line, the guards, the infantry, the cavalry, the artillery, and so forth.

These chief types, capable of many subdivisions and blendings, are the following:

(1) The submissive.

(2) The commanding.

(3) The desperate.

The submissive soldiers may be subdivided into (*a*) indifferently submissive and (*b*) busily submissive.

The commanding may be subdivided into (*a*) austerely commanding and (*b*) sagaciously commanding.

The desperate may be subdivided into (*a*) desperate jokers and (*b*) desperate debauchees.

The commonest type is a gentle, sympathetic type, which unites the best Christian virtues, meekness, piety, patience, and submission to the will of God, and is that of the submissive in general. The distinctive features of an indifferently submissive soldier are an imperturbable calm and contempt for all the vicissitudes of fortune to which he may be subjected. The distinctive feature of the submissive drunkard is a quiet, poetical inclination and sentimentality. The distinctive feature of the busily submissive is a limited mental capacity, united with an aimless industry and zeal.

The commanding type is found preponderantly in the higher spheres of the non-commissioned officers, among

corporals, under-officers, sergeants, and so forth. Among these, the austerely commanding type is noble, energetic, preëminently martial, and not devoid of high poetical impulses. To this type belonged Corporal Antónov, with whom I intend to acquaint the reader. The second subdivision is formed by the sagaciously commanding, who of late have been getting quite common. A sagaciously commanding non-commissioned officer is always eloquent, knows how to read and write, wears a pink shirt, does not eat from the common kettle, at times smokes Musát tobacco, considers himself incomparably higher than a common soldier, and is rarely as good a soldier as the commanding of the first order.

The desperate type, like the commanding type, is good only in the first subdivision: the distinctive traits of desperate jokers are their imperturbable cheerfulness, their ability to do everything, a well-endowed nature, and dashing spirit of adventure; this type is just as dreadfully bad in the second subdivision of desperate debauchees, who, however, to the honour of the Russian army be it said, occur very rarely, and wherever they are found are removed from companionship by the community of the soldiers themselves. The chief characteristics of this subdivision are faithlessness and a certain adventurousness in vice.

Velenchúk belonged to the order of the busily submissive. He was a Little-Russian by birth, fifteen years in active service, and though not a very fine-appearing man, and not a very agile soldier, he was simple-hearted, kindly, overzealous, though generally inopportunely so, and exceedingly honest. I say "exceedingly honest," because the year before there had been an incident when he had very palpably displayed this characteristic quality. It must be remarked that nearly every soldier has some trade; the most popular trades are those of a tailor and a shoemaker. Velenchúk had learned the first, and, to

judge from the fact that Sergeant Mikhaíl Doroféich himself had him make his clothes for him, he must have reached a certain artistic perfection in it.

The year before, while in camp, Velenchúk had undertaken to make a fine overcoat for Mikhaíl Doroféich; but in the night, when, after cutting the cloth and fixing the lining, he lay down to sleep with the goods under his head, a misfortune befell him: the cloth, which had cost seven roubles, had disappeared. With tears in his eyes, trembling lips, and restrained sobs, Velenchúk announced the fact to the sergeant. Mikhaíl Doroféich was furious. In the first moment of his anger he threatened the tailor, but later, being a man of means, and good at heart, he dropped the whole matter and did not ask any restitution of the value of the overcoat. However much bustling Velenchúk fretted and wept, as he was telling about his misfortune, the thief did not show up. Though there were strong suspicions against a desperate debauchee of a soldier, Chernóv by name, who was sleeping in the same tent with him, there were no positive proofs. The sagacious commander, Mikhaíl Doroféich, being a man of means and in some kind of partnership with the superintendent of arms and the steward, the aristocrats of the battery, very soon completely forgot the loss of that particular overcoat; Velenchúk, on the contrary, could not forget his misfortune. The soldiers said that they were afraid all the time that he would lay hands on himself or run away into the mountains, for this unfortunate accident had affected him powerfully. He did not eat, nor drink; he could not work, and wept all the time. Three days later he appeared before Mikhaíl Doroféich, and, all pale, drew with trembling hands a gold coin out of his rolled up sleeve, and handed it to him.

"Upon my word, this is all I have, Mikhaíl Doroféich, and I have borrowed it from Zhdánov," he said, sobbing again. "The two roubles that are wanting I will give

you, upon my word, as soon as I have earned them. He" (Velenchúk himself did not know who that "he" was) "has made me out a thief in your eyes. His vile, contemptible soul has taken the last thing away from his brother soldier; here I have been serving fifteen years, and —" To Mikhaíl Doroféich's honour, it must be said that he did not take from him the lacking two roubles, though Velenchúk offered them to him two months later.

III.

Besides Velenchúk, five other soldiers of my platoon were warming themselves at the fire.

In the best place, protected from the wind, on a cask, sat the gun-sergeant of the platoon, Maksímov, smoking a pipe. In the pose, the look, and all the motions of this man could be observed the habit of commanding and the consciousness of his personal dignity, even independently of the cask, on which he was sitting, and which, at a halt, formed the emblem of authority, and of the nankeen-covered fur half-coat.

When I came up, he turned his head toward me; but his eyes remained fixed upon the fire, and only much later did they follow the direction of his head, and rest upon me. Maksímov was a freeman; he was possessed of some means, had taken instruction in the school of the brigade, and had picked up some information. He was dreadfully rich and dreadfully learned, as the soldiers expressed themselves.

I remember how once, at gun-practice with the quadrant, he explained to the soldiers who were crowding around him that the level was "nothing else than that it originates because the atmospheric quicksilver has its motion." In reality, Maksímov was far from being stupid, and he knew his work very well, but he had an unfortunate peculiarity of speaking at times purposely in such a way that it was totally impossible to understand him, and so that, as I am convinced, he did not understand his own words. He was especially fond of the

words "originates" and "to continue," and when he introduced his remarks with "originates" and "continuing," I knew in advance that I should not understand a word of what followed. The soldiers, on the contrary, so far as I was able to observe, liked to hear his "originates," and suspected that a deep meaning lay behind it, though, like myself, they did not comprehend a word. They referred this lack of comprehension to their own stupidity, and respected Fédor Maksímych the more for it. In short, Maksímych was a sagacious commander.

The second soldier, who was taking off the boots from his red, muscular legs, was Antónov, the same bombardier Antónov, who in the year '37, having been left with two others at a gun, without protection, had kept up a fire against a numerous enemy, and, with two bullets in his hip, had continued to attend to the gun and load it. "He would have been a gun-sergeant long ago, if it were not for his character," the soldiers would say of him. Indeed, his was a strange character: in his sober mood there was not a quieter, prompter, and more peaceful soldier; but when he became intoxicated, he was an entirely different man: he did not respect the authorities, brawled, fought, and was an altogether useless soldier. Not more than a week before he had gone on a spree during Butter-week, and, in spite of all threats, persuasions, and calls to duty, he continued his drunken bouts and brawls until the first Monday in Lent. But during the whole fast, in spite of the order for all men in the division to eat meat, he lived on nothing but hardtack, and in the first week he did not even take the prescribed dram of brandy. However, it was only necessary to see this undersized figure, built as though of iron, with his short, crooked legs and shining, whiskered face, take into his muscular hands the balaláyka, while under the influence of liquor, and, carelessly casting his glances to both sides, strum some "lady's" song, or, to see him,

his overcoat, with the decorations dangling from it, thrown over shoulder, and his hands thrust into the pockets of his blue nankeen trousers, stroll down the street, — it was only necessary to see the expression of military pride and contempt of everything un-military, which was displayed in his face at such a time, in order to understand how utterly impossible it was for him to keep from fighting at such a moment an impertinent or even innocent orderly, who got in his way, or a Cossack, a foot-soldier, or settler, in general one who did not belong to the artillery. He fought and was turbulent not so much for his own amusement, as for the sake of supporting the spirit of the whole soldierhood, of which he felt himself to be a representative.

The third soldier, with an earring in one ear, bristly moustache, a sharp, birdlike face, and a porcelain pipe between his teeth, who was squatting near the fire, was the artillery-rider Chíkin. The dear man Chíkin, as the soldiers called him, was a joker. Whether in bitter cold, or up to his knees in mud, for two days without food, in an expedition, on parade, at instruction, the dear man always and everywhere made faces, pirouetted with his feet, and did such funny things that the whole platoon roared with laughter. At a halt or in camp there was always around Chíkin a circle of young soldiers, with whom he played cards; or he told them stories about a cunning soldier and an English milord, or imitated a Tartar or a German, or simply made his own remarks, which caused them nearly to die with laughter. It is true, his reputation as a joker was so well established in the battery that it was enough for him to open his mouth and wink, in order to provoke a general roar of laughter; but there was really something truly comical and unexpected in all he said and did. In everything he saw something especial, something that would not have occurred to anybody else, and what is more important, this

ability to see something funny did not fail him under any trial.

The fourth soldier was a homely young lad, a recruit of the last year's draft, who was now for the first time taking part in an expedition. He was standing in the smoke, and so close to the fire that it looked as though his threadbare fur coat would soon ignite; but, notwithstanding this, it was evident, from the way he spread the skirts of his coat, from his self-satisfied pose with his arching calves, that he was experiencing great pleasure.

And, finally, the fifth soldier, seated a little distance from the fire, and whittling a stick, was Uncle Zhdánov. Zhdánov had seen more service than any other soldier in the battery; he had known them all as recruits, and they called him uncle, from force of habit. It was reported that he never drank, nor smoked, nor played cards (not even *noski*), nor ever swore. All his time which was free from military service he spent in plying the shoemaker's trade; on holidays he went to church, whenever it was possible, or placed a kopek taper before the image, and opened the psalter, the only book which he could read. He associated little with the soldiers: he was coldly respectful to those who were higher in rank but younger in years; his equals he had little chance to meet, since he did not drink; but he was especially fond of recruits and young soldiers, — he always protected them, read the instructions to them, and frequently aided them. Everybody in the battery considered him a capitalist because he was possessed of twenty-five roubles with which he was prepared to assist those who really needed assistance. That same Maksímov, who was now gun-sergeant, told me that when he had arrived ten years ago as a recruit, and the older soldiers, who were given to drinking, drank up with him all the money he had, Zhdánov, noticing his unfortunate plight, called him up, upbraided him for his conduct, even gave him some blows, read him the instruction about

the behaviour of a soldier, and sent him away, giving him a shirt, for Maksímov had got rid of his, and half a rouble in money.

"He has made a man of me," Maksímov would say of him, with respect and gratitude. He had also helped Velenchúk, whom he had protected ever since he arrived as a recruit, at the time of the unfortunate loss of the overcoat, and he had aided many, many more during his twenty-five years of service.

It was impossible to expect in the service a man who knew his business better, or a soldier who was braver and more precise; but he was too meek and retiring to be promoted to the rank of gun-sergeant, though he had been bombardier fifteen years. Zhdánov's one pleasure, and even passion, was songs; he was especially fond of some of them, and he always gathered a circle of singers from among the young soldiers, and, though he could not sing himself, stood behind them, and, putting his hands into the pockets of his fur coat, and closing his eyes, expressed his satisfaction by the movement of his head and cheeks. I do not know why, but for some reason or other I discovered much expression in this even movement of the cheeks under his ears, which I had observed in nobody else but him. His snow-white head, his moustache dyed black, and his sunburnt, wrinkled face gave him, at first sight, a stern and austere expression; but, upon looking more closely into his large, round eyes, especially when they were smiling (he never smiled with his lips), you were impressed by something extraordinarily meek and almost childlike.

IV.

"Ah, I have forgotten my pipe. That's bad, brothers," repeated Velenchúk.

"You ought to smoke cigars, dear man!" remarked Chíkin, screwing up his mouth and winking. "I always smoke cigars at home; they are sweeter."

Of course, everybody rolled in laughter.

"So you forgot your pipe," interrupted Maksímov, not paying any attention to the general merriment, and, with the air of a superior, proudly knocking out the ashes by striking the pipe against the palm of his left hand. "What have you been doing there? Eh, Velenchúk?"

Velenchúk turned half-around to him, put his hand to his cap, and then dropped it.

"You evidently did not get enough sleep yesterday, and so you are now falling asleep standing. You won't get any reward for such behaviour."

"May I be torn up on the spot, Fédor Maksímych, if I have had a drop in my mouth; I do not know myself what is the matter with me," replied Velenchúk. "What occasion did I have to get drunk?" he muttered.

"That's it. One has to be responsible for you fellows before the authorities, and you keep it up all the time, — it is disgusting," concluded eloquent Maksímov, but in a calmer tone.

"It is really wonderful, brothers," continued Velenchúk, after a moment's silence, scratching the back of his head, and not addressing any one in particular. "Really, it is wonderful, brothers! Here I have been sixteen years in

the service, and such a thing has never happened to me before. When we were ordered to get ready for the march, I got up as usual, — there was nothing the matter; but suddenly it caught me in the park — it caught me and threw me down on the ground, and that was all — And I myself do not know how I fell asleep, brothers! It must be the sleeping disease," he concluded.

"Yes, I had a hard time waking you," said Antónov, pulling on his boot. "I kept pushing and pushing you, as though you were a log!"

"I say," remarked Velenchúk, "just as though I were drunk —"

"There was a woman at home," began Chíkin, "who had not left the oven bed for at least two years. They began to wake her once, thinking that she was asleep, but they found she was dead, — though her death resembled sleep. Yes, my dear man!"

"Just tell us, Chíkin, how you put on style when you had your leave of absence," said Maksímov, smiling and looking at me, as though to say, "Would you not like to hear the story of a foolish man?"

"What style, Maksímych?" said Chíkin, casting a cursory side glance at me. "I just told them all about the Caucasus."

"Of course, of course! Don't be so shy — tell us how you led them on."

"It is very simple: they asked me how we were living," Chíkin began, speaking hurriedly, having the appearance of a man who has told the same story several times. "I said: 'We live well, dear man: we get our provisions in full, — in the morning and evening of chocolate a cup to each soldier is brought up; and for dinner we get soup, not of oats, but of noble barley groats, and instead of brandy we get a cup of Modeira, Modeira Divirioo which, without the bottle, is at forty-two!'"

"Great Modeira!" shouted Velenchúk, louder than the rest, and bursting out laughing. "That's what I call Modeira!"

"Well, and did you tell them about the Esiatics?" Maksímov continued his inquiry, when the general laughter had subsided.

Chíkin bent down toward the fire, got a coal out with a stick, put it in his pipe, and for a long while puffed in silence his tobacco roots, as though unconscious of the silent curiosity of his hearers. When he finally had puffed up sufficient smoke, he threw away the coal, poised his cap farther back on his head, and, shrugging his shoulder and lightly smiling, he continued. "'What kind of a man is your small Circassian down there?' says one. 'Or is it the Turk you are fighting in the Caucasus?' Says I: 'Dear man, there is not one kind of Circassians down there, but many different Circassians there are. There are some mountaineers who live in stone mountains, and who eat stone instead of bread. They are big,' says I, 'a big log in size; they have one eye in the middle of the forehead,' and they wear red caps that glow like yours, dear man!" he added, addressing a young recruit, who, in fact, wore a funny little cap with a red crown.

At this unexpected turn, the recruit suddenly sat down on the ground, slapped his knees, and burst out laughing and coughing so hard that he could hardly pronounce with a choking voice, "Those are fine mountaineers!"

"'Then there are the Boobies,'" continued Chíkin, with a jerk of his head drawing his cap back on his forehead, "'these are twins, wee little twins, about this size. They always run in pairs, holding each other's hands,' says I, 'and they run so fast that you can't catch them on horseback.' 'Are those Boobies,' says one, 'born with clasped hands, my dear fellow?'" Chíkin spoke in a guttural

bass, as though imitating a peasant. "'Yes,' says I, 'dear man, he is such by nature. If you tear their hands apart, blood will ooze out, just as from a Chinaman; if you take off their caps, blood will flow.' 'Now tell me, good fellow, how do they carry on war?' says he. 'Like this,' says I, 'if they catch you, they slit open your belly, and begin to wind your guts about your arms. They wind them, but you laugh and laugh, until you give up the ghost—'"

"Well, did they believe you, Chíkin?" said Maksímov, with a slight smile, while the others were rolling in laughter.

"They are such strange people, Fédor Maksímych. They believe everything, upon my word, they do. But when I began to tell them about Mount Kazbék, telling them that the snow did not melt all summer there, they ridiculed me. 'Don't tell such fibs, good fellow,' they said. 'Who has ever heard such a thing: a big mountain, and the snow not melting on it! Why, even with us the snow melts on the mounds long before it has melted in the hollows.' So, go and explain matters to them," concluded Chíkin, winking.

V.

The bright disk of the sun, shining through the milk-white mist, had risen quite high; the grayish-violet horizon was widening all the time, and though it was farther away, it was also sharply closed in by the deceptive white mist wall.

In front of us, beyond the forest which had been cut down, there was opened up a fairly large clearing. Over the clearing there spread on all sides the smoke from the fires, now black, now milk-white, now violet, and the white layers of the mist were forming themselves into fantastic shapes. Far in the distance, occasionally appeared groups of Tartar horsemen, and were heard the infrequent reports of our carbines, and their guns and cannon.

"This was not yet an engagement, but mere child's play," as the good Captain Khlópov used to say.

The commander of the ninth company of sharpshooters, who were to flank us, walked up to the guns, pointed to three Tartar horsemen, who were at that time riding near the forest, at a distance of more than six hundred fathoms from us; he asked me, with that eagerness to see an artillery fire which is characteristic of all infantry officers in general, to give them a shot or a shell.

"Do you see," he said, with a kindly and convincing smile extending his hand from behind my shoulder, "there where the two high trees are? One of them, in front, is on a white horse, and dressed in a white mantle, and there, behind him, are two more. Do you see them? Couldn't you just —"

"And there are three others, riding near the forest," added Antónov, who had remarkably sharp eyes, approaching us, and concealing behind his back the pipe which he had been smoking. "The one in front has just taken out the gun from its case. You can see him plainly, your Honour!"

"I say, he has fired it off, brothers! There is the white puff of the smoke," said Velenchúk, in a group of soldiers who were standing a short distance behind us.

"He must have aimed at our cordon, the rascal!" remarked another.

"See what a lot of them the forest is pouring out. I suppose they are trying to find a place to station their cannon," added a third. "If we could just burst a shell in the midst of them, — that would make them spit — "

"What is your opinion? will it reach so far, dear man?" asked Chíkin.

"Five hundred or five hundred and twenty fathoms, not more," Maksímov said, coolly, as though speaking to himself, though it was evident that he was anxious to fire off the cannon, as the rest were. "If we were to give forty-five lines to the howitzer, we might hit it, — hit it square in the middle."

"Do you know, if you were to aim straight at this group, you would certainly hit somebody. See how they have all gathered in a mass! Now, quickly, give the order to fire," the commander of the company continued his entreaties.

"Do you order the gun to be aimed?" Antónov suddenly asked, in a jerky bass voice, with gloomy malice in his eyes.

I must confess that I myself was anxious for it, and so I ordered that the second cannon be brought into position.

No sooner had I given the order than the shell was

powdered, and rammed in, and Antónov, clinging to the gun-cheek, and placing his two fat fingers on the carriage-plate, was ordering the block-trail to the right and left.

"A trifle more to the left — a wee bit to the right — now, the least little bit more — now it's all right," he said, walking away from the gun with a proud face.

The infantry officer, I, and Maksímov, one after another put our eyes to the sight, and each expressed his particular opinion.

"Upon my word, it will carry across," remarked Velenchúk, clicking with his tongue, although he had only been looking over Antónov's shoulder, and therefore did not have the least reason for such a supposition. "Upon my word, it will carry across, and will strike that tree, brothers!"

"Second!" I commanded.

The crew stepped aside. Antónov ran to one side, in order to see the flight of the projectile; the fuse flashed, and the brass rang out. At the same time we were enveloped in powder-smoke, and through the deafening boom of the report was heard the metallic, whizzing sound of the projectile, flying with the rapidity of lightning, dying away in the distance amid a universal silence. A little behind the group of the horsemen appeared white smoke, the Tartars galloped away in both directions, and we heard the sound of the explosion.

"That was fine! How they are scampering! See, the devils don't like it!" were heard the approvals and jests in the ranks of the artillery and infantry.

"If we had aimed a little lower, we should have hit *him* straight," remarked Velenchúk. "I told you it would strike the tree, and so it did, — it went to the right."

VI.

LEAVING the soldiers to discuss the flight of the Tartars when they saw the shell, and why they were riding there, and how many of them still might be in the woods, I walked away with the commander of the company a few steps to one side, and seated myself under a tree, waiting for the warmed forcemeat cutlets which he had offered me. The commander of the company, Bolkhóv, was one of those officers who, in the regiment, are called "*bonjours*." He had means, had served in the guards, and spoke French. Yet, notwithstanding this, his comrades liked him. He was quite clever, and had enough tact to wear a St. Petersburg coat, to eat a good dinner, and to speak French, without unduly offending the society of his fellow officers. After speaking of the weather, of military engagements, of our common acquaintances among the officers, and convincing ourselves, by our questions and answers, and by our view of things, that there was a satisfactory understanding between us, we involuntarily passed to a more intimate conversation. Besides, in the Caucasus, among people of the same circle naturally arises the question, though not always expressed, "Why are you here?" To this silent question my companion, so it seemed to me, was trying to give a reply.

"When will this frontier work end?" he said, lazily. "It is dull!"

"Not to me," said I. "It is more tiresome on the staff."

"Oh, on the staff it is ten thousand times worse," he said, angrily. "No, when will all this end?"

"What is it you want to end?"

"Everything, altogether! — Are the cutlets ready, Nikoláev?" he asked.

"Why did you go to the Caucasus to serve, if the Caucasus is so displeasing to you?"

"Do you know why?" he replied, with absolute frankness. "By tradition. In Russia, you know, there exists an exceedingly strange tradition about the Caucasus, as though it were a promised land for all kinds of unhappy people."

"Yes, that is almost true," I said, "the greater part of us — "

"But what is best of all," he interrupted me, "is, that all of us who come to the Caucasus make dreadful mistakes in our calculations. Really, I can't see why, on account of an unfortunate love-affair or disorder in money matters, one should hasten to serve in the Caucasus rather than in Kazán or Kalúga. In Russia they imagine the Caucasus as something majestic, with eternal virgin snows, torrents, daggers, cloaks, Circassian maidens, — all this is terrifying, but, really, there is nothing jolly in it. If they only knew that you never are in the virgin snows, and that there is no special pleasure in being there, and that the Caucasus is divided into Governments, Stavrópol, Tiflís, and so forth — "

"Yes," I said, laughing, "in Russia we take an entirely different view of the Caucasus from what we do here. Have you not experienced this? when you read poetry in a language that you do not know very well, you imagine it to be much better than it really is — "

"I don't know, only I have no use for the Caucasus," he interrupted me.

"No, not so with me. I like the Caucasus even now, but differently — "

"Maybe the Caucasus is all right," he continued, as though provoked a little, "but I know this much: I am not good for the Caucasus."

"Why not?" I asked, in order to say something.

"Because, in the first place, it has deceived me. All that from which I had come away to be cured in the Caucasus, as the tradition has it, has followed me up here, — but with this difference. Formerly I was led to it on a large staircase, and now it is a small, dirty staircase, at each step of which I find millions of petty annoyances, meanness, insults; in the second place, because I feel that I am every day falling morally lower and lower, and, what is most important, because I feel unfit for this kind of service; I am unable to bear danger — I am simply not a brave man —"

He stopped and looked earnestly at me.

Although this unasked-for confession surprised me very much, I did not contradict him, as my interlocutor had evidently expected me to do, but awaited from him the refutation of his own words, which is always forthcoming under such circumstances.

"Do you know, I am to-day taking part in an action for the first time since I have been in the frontier guard," he continued, "and you will hardly believe what happened to me yesterday. When the sergeant brought the order that my company was to be in the column, I grew as pale as a sheet, and was unable to speak from trepidation. And if you only knew what a night I have passed! If it is true that people grow gray from fright, I ought to be entirely white to-day, for not one man condemned to death has suffered so much in one night as I have; though I am feeling a little more at ease now than I did in the night, it still goes around here," he added, moving his clinched hand in front of his breast. "Now this is certainly ridiculous," he continued, "a most terrible drama is being played here, and I myself am eating cutlets with onions, and persuading myself that all this is very gay. Have you any wine, Nikoláev?" he added, with a yawn.

"There *he* is, brothers!" was heard at that moment the

alarmed voice of one of the soldiers, and all eyes were directed to the edge of the far-off forest.

In the distance rose a bluish cloud of smoke, borne upwards by the wind, and constantly growing larger. When I understood that this was a shot which the enemy had aimed at us, everything that was before my eyes, everything suddenly assumed a new and majestic character. The stacked guns, and the smoke of the camp-fires, and the blue sky, and the green gun-carriages, and the sunburnt, whiskered face of Nikoláev, — everything seemed to tell me that the cannon-ball which had emerged from the smoke and which at that moment was flying through space might be directed straight at my breast.

"Where did you get your wine?" I asked Bolkhóv, lazily, while in the depth of my soul two voices were speaking with equal distinctness; one said, "Lord, receive my soul in peace," and the other, "I hope I shall not cower, but smile as the ball flies past me," and at the same instant something dreadfully disagreeable whistled over our heads, and struck the ground within two steps of us.

"Now, if I were a Napoleon or a Frederick," Bolkhóv remarked at that time, turning toward me with extraordinary composure, "I should utter some witticism."

"But you have told one just now," I replied, with difficulty concealing the alarm caused within me by the danger just past.

"Even if I have, nobody will make a note of it."

"I will."

"Yes, if you make a note of it, it will be to put in a critical paper, as Míshchenkov says," he added, smiling.

"Pshaw, you accursed one!" said Antónov, who was sitting behind us, angrily spitting to one side, "just missed my legs."

All my endeavours to appear cool and all our cunning phrases suddenly seemed intolerably stupid after this simple-hearted exclamation.

VII.

The enemy had really stationed two guns where the Tartars had been riding, and every twenty or thirty minutes they sent a shot at our wood-cutters. My platoon was moved out into the clearing, and the order was given to return the fire. At the edge of the forest appeared a puff of smoke, there was heard a discharge, a whistling, — and the ball fell behind or in front of us. The projectiles of the enemy lodged harmlessly, and we had no losses.

The artillerists conducted themselves well, as they always did, loaded expeditiously, carefully aimed at the puffs of smoke, and quietly joked each other. The flanking infantry detachment lay near us, in silent inaction, waiting for their turn. The wood-cutters did their work: the axes sounded through the woods faster and more frequently; only, whenever the whistling of the projectile was heard, everything suddenly grew quiet, and amid the dead silence could be heard the not very calm voices, "Get out of the way, boys!" and all eyes were directed toward the ball, ricocheting over the fires and the brush.

The fog was now completely lifted, and, assuming the forms of clouds, was slowly disappearing in the dark blue vault of the sky; the unshrouded sun shone brightly and cast its gleaming rays on the steel of the bayonets, the brass of the ordnance, the thawing earth, and the sparkling hoarfrost. The air was brisk with the freshness of the morning frost, together with the warmth of the vernal sun; thousands of different shadows and hues were mingled in the dry leaves of the forest, and on the hard shin-

ing road were distinctly visible the traces of the wheel tires and horse-shoe sponges.

Between the troops the motion grew more animated and more noticeable. On all sides flashed more and more frequently the bluish puffs of the discharges. The dragoons, with the pennons fluttering from their lances, rode out in front; in the companies of the infantry, songs were started, and the wagons with the wood were being drawn up in the rear. The general rode up to our platoon, and ordered us to get ready for the retreat. The enemy took up a position in the bushes, opposite our left flank, and began to harass us with musketry-fire. On the left side a bullet whizzed by from the forest and struck a gun-carriage, then a second, a third — The flanking infantry, which was lying near us, rose noisily, picked up their guns, and formed a cordon. The fusilade grew fiercer, and the bullets kept flying oftener and oftener. The retreat began, and, consequently, the real engagement, as is always the case in the Caucasus.

It was quite evident that the artillerists did not like the bullets, as awhile ago the foot-soldiers had enjoyed the cannon-balls. Antónov frowned. Chíkin imitated the sound of the bullets and made fun of them; but it was apparent that he did not like them. Of one he said, "What a hurry it is in!" another he called a "little bee;" a third one, which flew over us slowly, and whining pitifully, he called an "orphan," which provoked a universal roar.

The recruit, who was not used to this, bent his head aside and craned his neck every time a bullet passed by, which, too, made the soldiers laugh. "Is it an acquaintance of yours, that you are bowing to it?" they said to him. Velenchúk, who otherwise was exceedingly indifferent to danger, now was in an agitated mood: he was obviously angry because we did not fire any canister-shot in the direction from which the bullets proceeded. He

repeated several times, in a discontented voice: "Why do we let *him* shoot at us for nothing? If we trained our gun upon him, and treated him to a canister-shot, he probably would stop."

It was indeed time to do so. I ordered the last shell let out, and a canister-shot loaded.

"Canister-shot!" cried Antónov, lustily, before the smoke had dispersed, and walking up with the sponge to the gun the moment the shell had been discharged.

Just then I suddenly heard a short distance behind me the ping of a whizzing bullet striking against something. My heart was compressed. "It seems to me it has struck somebody," I thought, but at the same time I was afraid to turn around, under the influence of a heavy presentiment. Indeed, immediately following upon this sound was heard the heavy fall of a body, and "Oh, oh, oh!" the piercing cry of a wounded man. "It has struck me, brothers!" uttered with difficulty a voice which I recognized. It was Velenchúk. He lay flat on his back between the limber and the gun. The cartridge-box which he carried was thrown to one side. His forehead was blood-stained, and down his right eye and nose ran the thick red blood. The wound was in the abdomen, but he had hurt his forehead in his fall.

All this I found out much later; in the first moment I saw only an indistinct mass, and a terrible lot of blood, as I thought.

Not one of the soldiers, who were loading the gun, said a word, only the recruit mumbled something like, "I say, all bloody," and Antónov, scowling, angrily cleared his throat; but it was manifest that the thought of death had passed through the mind of each. Everybody went to work with a vim. The gun was loaded in a twinkle, and the cannoneer, in bringing the shot, made a couple of steps around the place on which the wounded man lay groaning.

VIII.

Every one who has been in an action has no doubt experienced that strange and strong, though not at all logical, feeling of disgust with the place where one has been killed or wounded. In the first moment my soldiers were obviously experiencing this feeling, when it was necessary to lift up Velenchúk and carry him to the vehicle which had just come up. Zhdánov angrily went up to the wounded man, in spite of his increasing shrieks took him under his arms, and raised him. "Don't stand around! Take hold of him!" he shouted, and immediately some ten men, even superfluous helpers, surrounded him. But the moment he was moved away, Velenchúk began to cry terribly and to struggle.

"Don't yell like a rabbit!" said Antónov, rudely, holding his leg, "or we will throw you down."

The wounded man really quieted down, and only occasionally muttered, "Oh, I shall die! Oh, brothers!"

When he was laid on the vehicle he stopped groaning, and I heard him speaking with his comrades in a soft, but audible voice, — he evidently was bidding them goodbye.

During an action, nobody likes to look at a wounded man, and I, instinctively hastening to get away from this spectacle, ordered that he be taken at once to the ambulance, and walked over to the guns; but a few minutes later I was told that Velenchúk was calling me, and I went up to the vehicle.

In the bottom of it, clinging with both hands to the

edges, lay the wounded man. His healthy, broad face had completely changed in a few seconds: he looked rather haggard and had aged by several years; his lips were thin, pale, and compressed under an evident strain; the restless, dull expression of his glance had given way to a clear, quiet gleam, and on his blood-stained forehead and nose already lay the imprint of death.

Notwithstanding the fact that the least motion caused him untold sufferings, he asked them to remove the money-pouch which was tied around his left leg, below the knee.

A terrible oppressive sensation overcame me at the sight of his white healthy leg, when the boot was taken off, and the pouch was ungirded.

"Here are three roubles and a half," he said to me, as I took the purse into my hand; "you keep them for me."

The vehicle started, but he stopped it.

"I was making an overcoat for Lieutenant Sulimóvski. He has given me two roubles. For one rouble and a half I bought buttons; the remaining half-rouble is in the bag with the buttons. Give it to him!"

"Very well, very well," I said, "only get well, my friend!"

He made no reply; the vehicle started, and he again began to sob and groan in the most heartrending manner. It looked as though, having arranged all his worldly affairs, he no longer saw cause for restraining himself, and considered it permissible to alleviate his suffering.

IX.

"WHERE are you going? Come back! Where are you going?" I cried to the recruit, who, having put his reserve linstock under his arm, and with a stick in his hand, was coolly following the vehicle in which the wounded soldier was lying.

But the recruit only looked lazily at me, muttered something, and went ahead, so that I had to send a soldier after him. He doffed his red cap, and, smiling stupidly, gazed at me.

"Where are you going?" I asked.

"To the camp."

"What for?"

"Why, Velenchúk is wounded," he said, smiling again.

"What have you to do with that? You must remain here."

He looked at me in surprise, then coolly wheeled around, put on his cap, and went back to his place.

The engagement was favourable to us: it was reported that the Cossacks had made a fine attack and had taken three Tartar bodies; the infantry was provided with wood, and lost only six wounded, and in the artillery only Velenchúk and two horses were put out of action. To atone for these losses, they cut out about three versts of timber, and so cleared the place that it was impossible to recognize it: in place of the dense forest now was opened up an immense clearing, covered with smoking fires and with the cavalry and infantry moving toward the camp.

Although the enemy continued to harass us with artillery and musketry fire, until we reached the brook by the cemetery, where we had forded in the morning, the retreat was successfully accomplished. I was already beginning to dream of cabbage soup and a leg of mutton with buckwheat groats, which were awaiting me in the camp, when the information was received that the general had ordered the construction of redoubts, and that the third battalion of the K—— regiment and a detachment of four batteries were to remain here until to-morrow. The wagons with the wood and the wounded, the Cossacks, the artillery, the infantry with their guns, and wood on their shoulders, — all passed by us, with noise and songs. All faces expressed animation and pleasure, induced by the past danger and the hope for a rest. But the third battalion and we were to postpone these pleasant sensations for the morrow.

X.

WHILE we, of the artillery, were still busy about the ordnance, and placing the limbers and caissons, and picketing the horses, the infantry had stacked their arms, built camp-fires, constructed booths of boughs and corn-stalks, and were boiling their buckwheat grits.

It was growing dark. Pale blue clouds scudded over the sky. The fog, changed into a drizzly, damp mist, wet the earth and the overcoats of the soldiers; the horizon grew narrower, and the surroundings were overcast with gloomy shadows. The dampness, which I felt through my boots and behind my neck, the motion and conversation, in which I took no part, the viscous mud, in which my feet slipped, and my empty stomach, put me in a very heavy and disagreeable mood, after a day of physical and moral fatigue. Velenchúk did not leave my mind. The whole simple story of his military life uninterruptedly obtruded on my imagination.

His last minutes were as clear and tranquil as all his life. He had lived too honestly and too simply for his whole-souled faith in a future, heavenly life to be shaken at such a decisive moment.

"Your Honour," said Nikoláev, approaching me, "you are invited to take tea with the captain."

Making my way between the stacked arms and the fires, I followed Nikoláev to Bolkhóv's, dreaming with pleasure of a glass of hot tea and a cheerful conversation, which would drive away my gloomy thoughts. "Well,

have you found him?" was heard Bolkhóv's voice from a corn-stalk tent, in which a candle was glimmering.

"I have brought him, your Honour!" was Nikoláev's reply in a heavy bass.

In the booth, Bolkhóv sat on a felt mantle, his coat being unbuttoned, and his cap off. Near him a samovár was boiling, and a drum stood with a lunch upon it. A bayonet, with a candle on it, was stuck in the ground. "Well, how do you like this?" he said, proudly, surveying his cosy little home. Indeed, the booth was so comfortable, that at tea I entirely forgot the dampness, the darkness, and Velenchúk's wound. We talked about Moscow and about objects that had no relation whatsoever to the war and to the Caucasus.

After one of those minutes of silence, which frequently interrupt the most animated conversations, Bolkhóv glanced at me with a smile.

"I suppose our morning conversation must have appeared very strange to you?" he said.

"No. Why should it? All I thought was that you were very frank, whereas there are some things which we all know but which one ought not to mention."

"Not at all! If I had a chance of exchanging this life for a most wretched and petty life, provided it were without perils and service, I should not consider for a minute."

"Why do you not go back to Russia?" I said.

"Why?" he repeated. "Oh, I have been thinking of it quite awhile. I cannot return to Russia before receiving the Anna and the Vladímir crosses, — the Anna decoration around my neck and a majorship, as I had expected when I came out here."

"But why should you, when, as you say, you feel unfit for the service here?"

"But I feel myself even more unfit to return to Russia in the condition in which I left it. This is another tradi-

tion, current in Russia and confirmed by Pássek, Slyeptsóv, and others, that all one has to do is to come to the Caucasus, in order to be overwhelmed with rewards. Everybody expects and demands this of us; and here I have been two years, have taken part in two expeditions, and have not received anything yet. I have so much egotism that I will not leave this place until I am made a major with the Vladímir and Anna around my neck. I have got so far into this, that nothing will mortify me so much as to have Gnilokíshkin get this promotion, and me not get one. Then again, how can I show up in Russia before my elder, the merchant Kotélnikov, to whom I sell my grain, before my Moscow aunt, and before all those gentlemen, after two years in the Caucasus, without any advancement? It is true, I do not care to know these gentlemen, and, no doubt, they care very little for me; and yet a man is so built that, although he does not care one bit for such gentlemen, he wastes the best years, the whole happiness of his life, and his whole future on account of them."

XI.

Just then the voice of the commander of the battalion was heard outside the tent: "With whom are you there, Nikoláy Fédorovich?"

Bolkhóv gave him my name, and thereupon three officers entered the booth: Major Kirsánov, the adjutant of his battalion, and the captain, Trosénko.

Kirsánov was a short, plump man, with a black moustache, ruddy cheeks, and sparkling eyes. His small eyes were the most prominent feature of his face. Whenever he laughed, all there was left of them were two moist little stars, and these stars, together with his stretched lips and craning neck, assumed a very strange expression of blankness. Kirsánov conducted himself in the army better than anybody else; his inferiors did not speak ill of him, and his superiors respected him, although the common opinion was that he was exceedingly dull. He knew his duties, was exact and zealous, always had money, kept a carriage and a cook, and very naturally knew how to pretend that he was proud.

"What are you chatting about, Nikoláy Fédorovich?" he said, upon entering.

"About the amenities of the service in the Caucasus."

But just then Kirsánov noticed me, a yunker, and, to let me feel his importance, he asked, as though not hearing Bolkhóv's answer, and glancing at the drum:

"Are you tired, Nikoláy Fédorovich?"

"No, we —" Bolkhóv began.

But again the dignity of the commander of the battalion seemed to demand that he should interrupt and propose a new question.

"Was it not a fine engagement we had to-day?"

The adjutant of the battalion was a young ensign, who had but lately been promoted from yunker, — a modest and quiet lad, with a bashful and good-naturedly pleasant face. I had seen him before at Bolkhóv's. The young man used to call on him often, when he would bow, take a seat in the corner, for hours roll cigarettes and smoke them in silence, get up again, salute, and walk away. He was a type of a poor Russian yeoman, who had selected the military career as the only possible one with his culture, and who placed the calling of an officer higher than anything else in the world, — a simple-hearted, pleasing type in spite of its ridiculous inseparable appurtenances, the tobacco-pouch, the dressing-gown, the guitar, and the moustache brush, with which we are accustomed to connect it. They told of him in the army that he had boasted of being just, but severe with his orderly, that he had said, "I rarely punish, but when I am provoked they had better look out," and that, when his drunken orderly had stolen a number of things of him and had even begun to insult him, he had brought him to the guard-house, and ordered him to be chastised, but that when he saw the preparations for the punishment, he so completely lost his composure that he was able only to say, "Now, you see — I can — " and that in utter confusion he ran home, and never again was able to look straight into the eyes of his Chernóv. His comrades gave him no rest, and teased him about it, and I had several times heard the simple-minded lad deny the allegation, and, blushing up to his ears, insist that it was not only not true, but that quite the opposite was the fact.

The third person, Captain Trosénko, was an old Caucasus soldier in the full sense of the word, that is, a man

for whom the company which he was commanding had become his family, the fortress where the staff was stationed his home, and the singers his only amusement in life, — a man for whom everything which was not the Caucasus was worthy of contempt, and almost undeserving belief; but everything which was the Caucasus was divided into two halves, ours, and not ours; the first he loved, the second he hated with all the powers of his soul, and, what is most important, he was a man of tried, quiet bravery, rare kindness of heart in relation to his comrades and inferiors, and of an aggravating straightforwardness and even rudeness in relation to adjutants and *bonjours*, whom he for some reason despised. Upon entering the booth, he almost pierced the roof with his head, then suddenly lowered it, and sat down on the ground.

"Well?" he said, and, suddenly noticing my unfamiliar face, he stopped, gazing at me with his turbid, fixed glance.

"So, what were you talking about?" asked the major, taking out his watch and looking at it, though I was firmly convinced that there was no need for his doing so.

"He was asking me why I was serving here."

"Of course, Nikoláy Fédorovich wants to distinguish himself here, and then go back home."

"Well, you tell me, Abrám Ilích, why do you serve in the Caucasus?"

"Because, you see, in the first place, we are all obliged to serve. What?" he added, though all were silent. "Yesterday I received a letter from Russia, Nikoláy Fédorovich," he continued, evidently desiring to change the subject. "They write to me — they make such strange inquiries."

"What inquiries?" asked Bolkhóv.

He laughed.

"Really, strange questions — they want to know

whether there can be any jealousy without love — What?" he asked, looking at all of us.

"I say!" said Bolkhóv, smiling.

"Yes, you see, it is good in Russia," he continued, as though his phrases naturally proceeded each from the previous one. "When I was in Tambóv in '52, I was everywhere received like an aid-de-camp. Will you believe me, at the governor's ball, when I entered, don't you know, I was beautifully received. The wife of the governor, you know, talked with me and asked me about the Caucasus, and all — really I did not know — They looked at my gold sabre as at a rarity, and they asked me what I got the sabre for, and for what the Anna cross, and for what the Vladímir cross, and I told them — What? — This is what the Caucasus is good for, Nikoláy Fédorovich!" he continued, not waiting for an answer. "There they look at us, Caucasus officers, very well. Young man, you know, a staff-officer with an Anna and a Vladímir cross, — that means a great deal in Russia — What?"

"I suppose you did a little bragging, Abrám Ilích?" said Bolkhóv.

"He-he!" he laughed his stupid smile. "You know one must do that. And I did feast during those two months!"

"Is it nice there, in Russia?" asked Trosénko, inquiring about Russia as though it were China or Japan.

"Yes, it was an awful lot of champagne we drank during those two months!"

"I don't believe it. You must have drunk lemonade. If I had been there, I would have burst drinking, just to show them how officers of the Caucasus drink. My reputation would not be for nothing. I would have showed them how to drink — Hey, Bolkhóv?" he added.

"But you, uncle, have been for ten years in the Caucasus," said Bolkhóv, "and do you remember

what Ermolóv said? And Abrám Ilích has been only six —"

"Ten years? It is nearly sixteen."

"Bolkhóv, let us have some of your sage. It is damp, brrrr! Hey?" he added, smiling. "Let us have a drink, major!"

But the major was dissatisfied with the first remarks of the old captain, and now was even more mortified, and sought a refuge in his own grandeur. He tuned a song, and again looked at his watch.

"I will never travel to Russia," continued Trosénko, paying no attention to the frowning major. "I have forgotten how to walk and talk like a Russian. They will say 'What monster is this that has arrived.' I say, this is Asia. Is it not so, Nikoláy Fédorovich? What am I to do in Russia? All the same, I shall be shot some day here. They will ask, 'Where is Trosénko?' Shot. What are you going to do with the eighth company — eh?" he added, addressing the major all the time.

"Send the officer of the day along the battalion!" shouted Kirsánov, without replying to the captain, though I was again convinced that he had no orders to give.

"I suppose you are glad, young man, that you are receiving double pay now?" said the major, after a few minutes' silence, to the adjutant of the battalion.

"Of course, very much so."

"I find that our pay is now very large, Nikoláy Fédorovich," he continued. "A young man can live quite decently, and even allow himself some luxuries."

"No, really, Abrám Ilích," timidly said the adjutant, "though the pay is double, yet — one must keep a horse —"

"Don't tell me that, young man! I have myself been an ensign, and I know. Believe me, one can live, with

proper care. Now, figure up," he added, bending the little finger of his left hand.

"We take all our pay in advance, — so here is your calculation," said Trosénko, swallowing a wine-glass of brandy.

"Well, what do you want for that — What?"

At this moment a white head with a flat nose was thrust through the opening of the booth, and a sharp voice with a German accent said:

"Are you here, Abrám Ilích? The officer of the day is looking for you."

"Come in, Kraft!" said Bolkhóv.

A long figure in the coat of the general staff squeezed through the door, and began to press everybody's hands with great fervour.

"Ah, dear captain! you are here, too?" he said, addressing Trosénko.

The new guest, in spite of the darkness, made his way toward him, and to the captain's great surprise and dissatisfaction, as I thought, kissed his lips.

"This is a German who wants to be a good comrade," I thought.

XII.

My supposition was soon confirmed. Captain Kraft asked for some brandy, calling it by its popular name, and clearing his throat terribly, and throwing back his head, drained the wine-glass.

"Well, gentlemen, we have crisscrossed to-day over the plains of the Chechnyá," he began, but, upon noticing the officer of the day, he grew silent, so as to give the major a chance to give his orders.

"Well, have you inspected the cordon?"

"I have, sir."

"Have the ambushes been sent out?"

"They have been, sir."

"Then communicate the order to the commanders of the companies to be as cautious as possible!"

"Yes, sir."

The major closed his eyes and became thoughtful.

"Tell the people that they may now cook their grits."

"They are cooking them now."

"Very well. You may go."

"Well, we were figuring out what an officer needed," continued the major, with a condescending smile, addressing us. "Let us figure out!"

"You need one uniform and a pair of trousers. Is it not so?"

"Yes, sir."

"Let us call it fifty roubles for two years; consequently, this makes twenty-five roubles a year for clothes; then for board forty kopeks a day. Is that right?"

"Yes; it is even too much."

"Well, let us suppose it. Then, for the horse with the saddle for the remount, thirty roubles, — that is all. That makes in all twenty-five, and one hundred and twenty, and thirty, equal to one hundred and seventy-five roubles. There is still left enough for luxuries, for tea and sugar, and for tobacco, — say twenty roubles. Don't you see? Am I right, Nikoláy Fédorovich?"

"No, excuse me, Abrám Ilích!" timidly remarked the adjutant. "Nothing will be left for tea and sugar. You figure one pair for two years, whereas in these expeditions you can't get enough pantaloons. And the boots? I wear out a pair almost every month. Then the underwear, the shirts, the towels, the sock-rags, all these have to be bought. Count it up and nothing will be left. Upon my word, it is so, Abrám Ilích."

"Yes, it is fine to wear sock-rags," Kraft suddenly remarked after a moment's silence, with special delight pronouncing the word "sock-rags." "You know it is so simple, so Russian!"

"I will tell you something," said Trosénko. "Count as you may, it will turn out that we fellows ought to be shelved, whereas in reality we manage to live, and to drink tea, and to smoke tobacco, and to drink brandy. After you have served as long as I have," he continued, addressing the ensign, "you will learn how to get along. Do you know, gentlemen, how he treats his orderly?"

And Trosénko, almost dying with laughter, told us the whole story of the ensign with his orderly, although we had heard it a thousand times before.

"My friend, what makes you look like a rose?" he continued, addressing the ensign, who was blushing, perspiring, and smiling so that it was a pity to look at him.

"Never mind, I was just like you, and yet I have turned out to be a fine fellow. You let a young fellow from Russia get down here, — we have seen some of them,

— and he will get spasms and rheumatism, and all such things! But I am settled here, — here is my house, my bed, and everything. You see — "

Saying which, he drained another wine-glass of brandy.

"Ah!" he added, looking fixedly into Kraft's eyes.

"This is what I respect! This is a genuine old Caucasus officer! Let me have your hand!"

Kraft pushed us all aside, made his way toward Trosénko, and, grasping his hand, shook it with much feeling.

"Yes, we may say that we have experienced everything here," he continued. "In the year '45 — you were there, captain? — do you remember the night of the 12th which we passed knee-deep in the mud and how the next day we went into the abatis? I was then attached to the commander-in-chief, and we took fifteen abatises in one day. Do you remember it, captain?"

Trosénko made a sign of confirmation with his head, and closed his eyes, and protruded his lower lip.

"So you see — " began Kraft, with much animation, and making inappropriate gestures while addressing the major.

But the major, who no doubt had heard the story more than once, suddenly looked with such dim, dull eyes at his interlocutor that Kraft turned away from him and addressed Bolkhóv and me, glancing now at one, now at the other. At Trosénko he did not once look during his recital.

"So you see, when we went out in the morning, the commander-in-chief said to me, 'Kraft, take the abatises!' You know, our military service demands obedience without reflection, — so, hand to the visor, 'Yes, your Excellency!' and off I went. When we reached the first abatis I turned around and said to the soldiers, 'Boys, courage! Look sharp! He who lags behind will be cut down by my own hand.' With a Russian soldier, you know, you must speak plainly. Suddenly — a shell. I looked, one

soldier, another soldier, a third, then bullets — whizz! whizz! whizz! Says I, 'Forward, boys, after me!' No sooner had we reached it, you know, we looked, and there I saw that — you know — what do you call it?" and the narrator waved his arms in his attempt to find the proper word.

"A ditch," Bolkhóv helped him out.

"No — ah, what is it called? My God! Well, what is it? — a ditch," he said, hurriedly. "We, 'Charge bayonets!' — Hurrah! Ta-ra-ta-ta-ta! Not a soul of the enemy. You know we were all surprised. Very well. We marched ahead, — the second abatis. That was another matter. We were now on our mettle. No sooner did we walk up than we saw, I observed, the second abatis, — impossible to advance. Here — what do you call it, well, what is that name? — ah, what is it? — "

"Again a ditch," I helped him out.

"Not at all," he continued, excitedly. "No, not a ditch, but — well, what do you call it?" and he made an insipid gesture with his hand. "Ah, my God! What do you call it?"

He was apparently suffering so much that we wanted to help him out.

"Maybe a river," said Bolkhóv.

"No, simply a ditch. But the moment we went up there was such a fire, a hell — "

Just then somebody asked for me outside the tent. It was Maksímov. Since there were thirteen other abatises left after having listened to the varied story of the first two, I was glad to use this as an excuse for leaving for my platoon. Trosénko went out with me. "He is lying," he said to me after we had walked several steps away from the booth, "he never was in the abatises," and Trosénko laughed so heartily that I, too, felt amused.

XIII.

It was dark night, and the fires dimly illuminated the camp, when I, having put everything away, walked up to my soldiers. A large stump was glimmering on the coals. Three soldiers only were sitting around it: Antónov, who was turning around on the fire a little kettle in which hardtack soaked in lard was cooking, Zhdánov, who was thoughtfully poking the ashes with a stick, and Chíkin, with his eternally unlighted pipe. The others had already retired for their rest, some under the caissons, others in the hay, and others again around the fires. In the faint light of coals I could distinguish the familiar backs, legs, and heads; among the latter was also the recruit, who was lying close to the fire and was apparently asleep. Antónov made a place for me. I sat down near him and lighted my pipe. The mist and the pungent smoke from the green wood was borne through the air, and made my eyes smart, and the same damp mist drizzled down from the murky sky.

Near us could be heard the even snoring, the crackling of the branches in the fire, a light conversation, and occasionally the clattering of the infantry muskets. All about us glowed the fires, illuminating in a small circle the black shadows of the soldiers. At the nearest fires I could distinguish in the lighted spaces the figures of naked soldiers waving their shirts over the very fire. Many other men were not asleep, but moving about and speaking in the space of fifteen square fathoms; but the dark, gloomy night gave a peculiar, mysterious aspect to

all this motion, as though all felt this melancholy quiet and were afraid to break its tranquil harmony. When I began to speak, I felt that my voice sounded quite differently; in the faces of all the soldiers who were sitting near the fire I read the same mood. I thought that previous to my arrival they had been speaking of their wounded companion, but that was not at all the case: Chíkin was telling about the reception of goods at Tiflís, and about the schoolboys of that city.

Always and everywhere, but especially in the Caucasus, have I noticed the peculiar tact of our soldiers, who, during peril, pass over in silence and avoid all such things as might unhappily affect the minds of their comrades. The spirit of the Russian soldiers is not based, like the bravery of the southern nations, on an easily inflamed, and just as easily extinguished, enthusiasm. They do not need effects, speeches, military cries, songs, and drums; they need, on the contrary, quiet, order, and the absence of all banality. In Russian, real Russian, soldiers, you will never observe vain bragging, posing, a desire to obscure themselves and to excite themselves in time of danger; on the contrary, modesty, simplicity, and an ability to see in a danger something else than the danger itself, are the distinctive features of their character.

I have seen an outrider, who had been wounded in his leg, in the first moment express his regrets only for the torn fur coat, and then creep out from under the horse, which had been killed under him, and loosen the straps, in order to take off the saddle. Who does not remember the incident at the siege of Gérgebel, when the fuse of a bomb which had just been filled caught fire in the laboratory, and the artificer told two soldiers to take the bomb and run away as fast as possible, in order to throw it into a ditch; the soldiers did not throw it away in the nearest place, which was not far from the colonel's tent, which stood over the ditch, but carried it farther away,

not to wake the gentlemen who were sleeping in the tent, and so they were both torn to pieces. I remember how, during frontier service in 1852, one of the young soldiers, for some reason, remarked during an action, that he thought the platoon would never come out alive from it, and how the whole platoon angrily upbraided him for such evil words, which they would not even repeat.

Even now, when the thought of Velenchúk ought to have been in everybody's mind, and when any moment a volley might be fired by Tartars creeping up to the camp, everybody was listening to Chíkin's animated story, and nobody recalled the action of the morning, nor the imminent danger, nor the wounded man, as though all that had happened God knows how long ago, or not at all. But it seemed to me that their faces were a little more melancholy than usual; they did not listen very attentively to Chíkin's story, and even Chíkin felt that he was not listened to, and kept talking from mere force of habit.

Maksímov went up to the fire and sat down near me. Chíkin made a place for him, grew silent, and again started sucking his pipe.

"The foot-soldiers have sent to camp for brandy," said Maksímov, after a considerable silence. "They have just returned." He spit into the fire. "An under-officer told me that he saw our man."

"Well, is he still alive?" asked Antónov, turning his kettle.

"No, he is dead."

The recruit in the small red cap suddenly raised his head above the fire, for a moment looked fixedly at Maksímov and at me, then swiftly lowered his head, and wrapped himself in his overcoat.

"You see, death did not come to him for nothing this morning, as I was waking him in the park," said Antónov.

"Nonsense!" said Zhdánov, turning around a glowing stump, and all grew silent.

brothers?" continued Zhdánov. "They have enough to do to support themselves, so what good would one of us soldiers be to them? A man is a poor helper when he has been a soldier for twenty-five years. And who knows whether they are alive?"

"Have you not written to them?" I asked.

"Of course I have! I have written them twice, but they have not yet answered. They are either dead, or they simply don't care to answer, which means, they are poor, and have no time."

"How long ago did you write?"

"When I came back from Dargí, I wrote my last letter!"

"Sing the song of the 'Birch-tree,'" Zhdánov said to Antónov, who, leaning on his knees, was humming a song.

Antónov sang the "Birch-tree" song.

"This is Uncle Zhdánov's favourite song," Chíkin said to me in a whisper, pulling me by the overcoat. "Many a time, when Filípp Antónych sings it, he weeps."

Zhdánov sat at first motionless, his eyes directed on the glowing coals, and his face, illuminated by the reddish light, looked exceedingly melancholy; then his cheeks under his ears began to move faster and faster, and finally he got up, spread out his overcoat, and lay down in the shadow, behind the fire. It may be the way he was tossing and groaning, or Velenchúk's death and the gloomy weather had so affected me, but I really thought he was crying.

The lower part of the stump, changed into coal, flickered now and then and illuminated Antónov's figure, with his gray moustache, red face, and his decorations on the overcoat thrown over him, or lighted up somebody's boots or head. From above, drizzled the same gloomy mist; in the air was the same odour of dampness and smoke; all around me were seen the same bright points of dying fires, and were heard amid a general silence the sounds

of Antónov's melancholy song; and whenever it stopped for a moment, its refrain was the sounds of the faint nocturnal motion of the camp, of the snoring, of the clattering of the sentries' guns, and of subdued conversation.

"Second watch! Makatyúk and Zhdánov!" shouted Maksímov.

Antónov stopped singing; Zhdánov rose, sighed, stepped across a log, and slowly walked over to the guns.

June 15, 1855.

THE END.

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